UNDERSTANDING THE ADOLESCENT GIRL

GRACE LOUCKS ELLIOTT

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BY GRACE LOUCKS ELLIOTT

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NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

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Printed February, 1930

PRINTED IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	THE ADOLESCENT GIRL	3
	Periods of Adolescent Development	5
	Physiological Factors	6
	Decrease of Creative Activities	11
II.	UNDERSTANDING ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOR	14
	Symptoms *vs.* Roots of Difficulty	14
	The Origin of Adolescent Habit Patterns	21
	Original Nature	25
	Stages of Development	27
	Fundamental Needs of Personality	32
	Attitude Towards Emotional Difficulty	36
III.	THE MAJOR ADJUSTMENTS OF ADOLESCENCE	40
	Establishing Relations with Boys	48
	Choosing a Vocation	54
	Arriving at a Philosophy of Life	60
IV.	COMMON ADOLESCENT DIFFICULTIES	65
	Crushes	65
	Masturbation	74
	Idealization—Playing a Part	76
	Being Sorry for Oneself	81

CHAPTER PAGE

"Busyness" 83

A Boss or a Slacker on the Job . . . 85

V. GROWING OUT OF ADOLESCENCE SUCCESSFULLY 88

Understanding the Girl's Environment . . 90

Conflicts from Past Experience . . . 92

The Place of a Coach 94

How to Determine Right and Wrong . . 98

VI. ENRICHING THE LIFE OF ADOLESCENTS 105

Making Friends 105

Clothes and Things 108

Dramatics and Dancing 110

Music and Literature 112

Ideals 114

Religion 115

VII. ADULTS AND ADOLESCENTS . . . 121

Use of Authority 122

Objectivity Toward Herself 126

Willingness to Confess Ignorance . . . 127

Absence of Condemnation 129

FOREWORD

THIS book aims to be of help to teachers, leaders, parents and other adults who are related to girls in the period of adolescent adjustment as well as to the adolescent girls themselves. The aim is to point out, as simply as possible, some of the common problems of adolescent girls, to analyze the pertinent factors that produce them, and to indicate the equipment necessary for leadership.

Every stage of learning how to live as a person among other persons has its difficulties. Adjustments commence with the time the baby first tries to get along with her parents, and continue through the time she learns to live with schoolmates, in community groups, and in home and professional relationships. While most of these adjustments are common to both sexes, there are for the girl, at the adolescent period of development, problems which need special consideration. This is not to say that girls are inherently different from boys in their development, but rather to recognize that to be a girl in the midst of the assumptions and conventions of the present day is to have to face certain kinds of difficulties that boys do not meet, at least not in the same form.

The material in the book gathers up the author's experience with national and local groups in the Young Women's Christian Association, the Girls' Friendly

Society and similar agencies. It includes the experience gained through contact with college groups, girls' clubs, church school classes, young people's societies, and in interviews with many individual girls.

The assumptions and interpretations in this material are based on the best available psychological knowledge. There has been no effort made to include all of the material germane to a psychology of adolescence, but rather to consider those problems which have been found most frequently recurring in the author's actual experience with girls. There has been an attempt to avoid as far as possible the technical terminology of any school of psychology, in the belief that technical terms often confuse the lay reader, and that it is more useful to describe than to label difficulties. Extreme abnormal conduct, both neurotic and psychotic, has been excluded, both because more data are available for understanding those types of behavior than those which are characteristic of the average girl, in clubs or groups, and because handling such problems is the function of the professional expert in those realms. The bibliography at the end of each chapter is not an exhaustive record of research or reading, but is rather a list of the material which will be of most practical value to the leader.

GRACE LOUCKS ELLIOTT.

New York City,
February, 1930

UNDERSTANDING THE ADOLESCENT GIRL

CHAPTER I

THE ADOLESCENT GIRL

THE adolescent girl is both the delight and the despair of the adults with whom she is associated. Nowhere is the ideal of the abundant life, which has caught the imagination of men and women for nineteen centuries, more clearly validated than in her spontaneous enthusiasm, her vivid interests, her idealistic hopes, and her whole-hearted affections. Because these characteristics sometimes are found in their fullness, it seems fair to believe that they are a possibility for every girl; and yet, in any community, many of the girls, not a subject for discipline or a cause for any particular concern, are failing to achieve their possibilities in richness of life; and still others are wrecking life because they are not making the adjustments of adolescence successfully.

Those who seek to be understanding friends of adolescents are baffled by the varied types of girls with which they must deal, and by the diversified needs of any group. There are those who can be counted on to object to any suggestion made to them, and those who monotonously agree to whatever is proposed; those who insist upon playing in the center of the stage at any cost to the rest of the group, and those who withdraw from their associates and live in a world of their own making; those who are feverishly

gay, and those who are listless and *blasé;* those who are naughty children, and those who are "examples"; those who are "boy-crazy," and those who are uncomfortable in the presence of the opposite sex. Even the dominant mood of any individual girl may vary so widely that the girl who is the life of the party one evening may have a sense of hopeless depression the next; the girl who makes strong assertions of affection for a friend on one day may find herself saying bitter things to her on another; the girl dependable in most situations may act in a wholly irresponsible way in a special one. Every adviser has to deal with sudden flare-ups of emotion which are quite out of proportion to the circumstances from which they arise. Many a girl has liked or disliked another at first sight; many a girl has expressed her affection for an adviser with the persistent intensity of a little child. Why she should behave as she does is an even more baffling question to the girl than to the leader.

It is trite to say that adolescence is a period of turmoil and confusion, yet few have really analyzed the factors that make for the increase or decrease of the confusion so often perplexing.[1] We notice the girl's self-consciousness, her inconsistent and often exaggerated behavior, her conformities and her revolts, her

[1] It will be interesting, as a contrast to the study in this chapter, to compare the data presented by Margaret Mead, in the record of her work with a primitive group in *Coming of Age in Samoa,* the conclusion of which is, "with the exception of a few cases, adolescence represents no period of crisis or stress, but was instead an orderly development of a set of slowly maturing interests and activities." Her analysis of the factors that account for the differences between the civilized and primitive girl, in her chapter on Educational Implications, will be very stimulating to those interested in the building of an educational program for modern adolescence.

depressions and her enthusiasm, sometimes with condemnation and sometimes with admiration, but often with little understanding of the meanings of all such gropings toward selfhood. The girl often demands the right to express herself, only to be baffled by the unsatisfying result. She does not understand that from the "ensemble of all her selves" she must achieve a self to express. When the adolescent is awkward with her hands or feet, when she develops unhappy habits of manner or speech, when she plays disconcerting rôles, and poses, it is not useful to try to find out from her why she does it. Could she answer, she would probably be less a problem to herself and to her elders. It is just because she does not understand herself and her actions that she is so baffled and so baffling.

PERIODS OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

Much of the material dealing with adolescence divides it into early, middle, and later periods, describing the characteristics of each period. This does not seem practically useful, because of the number of factors other than age which tend to determine problems faced by the individual girl. The most constant factor may be said to be the time of physical maturing, but even this varies as much as four years. The accompaniments of that physical development vary with the environment and the experience of the individual girl. The awakening and the maturing of the physical, mental, social, and religious life may be so accelerated

that the span of the development may cover as many months for one girl as it does years for another.

One girl with limited contacts may go through her experience of "puppy love" at twenty-five instead of fifteen. Another girl may have carried so much responsibility before sixteen that she has the understanding and the intellectual and emotional poise usually found in one years her senior by chronological reckoning. Many a girl in a city high school is more sophisticated, and has tried out more phases of life than a girl of more limited background who has finished college. Because so many of the problems that girls face are due to the kinds of stimulus to which they are subjected, it is important to understand the type of experience and the problems each has had, rather than to know her chronological age. The basis for understanding any particular girl will be the leader's knowledge of the whole range of adolescent development, her realization that any characteristic may appear early or late, and her ability to recognize conduct at whatever time it appears.

PHYSIOLOGICAL FACTORS

No attempt will be made to discuss at length the physiological changes of adolescence. Data relating to this aspect are within easy access. It is sufficient to say that those whose physical organisms have already attained their full growth may need to remind themselves of the feelings that accompany especially rapid muscular and bone development. A girl sud-

denly gets too big to be held just when the holding seems very important. She calls attention to herself by dropping things just when she would like to be least conspicuous. Her feet are noticeably large (to her) just when she begins to be conscious of her physical characteristics.

In addition to the anatomical development, there are the glandular changes which influence the whole tone and affectivity of the organism. They are accompanied by strange feelings, for which the girl has often been entirely unprepared. The degree of difficulty in adolescent adjustments is often in direct proportion to the lack of understanding the girl has of herself and of the new forces functioning within her. One of the most apparent of these developments is within the area of sex. The facts of menstruation have often been so inadequately explained to the girl that it may be accompanied by a sense of mystery or feelings of shame and disgust that may have far-reaching effects on her later sex attitudes. Not only must she come to understand the external functions of the sex glands and organs, but she must also learn to live with the feelings that accompany the internal secretions of these glands; that is, not only must she adjust herself to the external fact of menstruation, but she must begin to deal with or to evade the periodic recurrence of sex desire, which is related to the external process, but may not have been included in the explanation of the visible function. There seems to be a definite relation between restlessness, tension, and sex desire, and the monthly functioning of the sex organs. Certain types of depression and

of creative urge seem to have their roots in the physical functioning of the body instead of in some spiritual adjustment or lack of it. For many girls, there are certain days in the month when it is easier to do things that require initiative, and others when the threshold of irritability is unusually high. When we know more of the relation of the functioning of the sex organs to the repulsion or attraction of certain activities, we shall have a sounder basis for the building of individual and group programs. This is not to say that the feelings connected with sex functions are always recognized as such. Many girls have never discovered the relation of the emotional urges they feel to their physical accompaniments.[2]

This, which is more directly observable in the case of sex development, is equally true of the functioning of all the glands of internal secretion. The rapid growth of adolescence is likely to make heavy demands on the whole metabolism of the body, and any tendency to glandular maladjustment may be aggravated at this time. There is in adolescence a quickened sensitivity in all the body, and a more marked acceleration in reaction time to stimuli of all kinds, because of the changes in the structure and function of the organs.

[2] Blanchard, *The Adolescent Girl*, p. 132. "The adolescent longs for great emotional experiences to which the awakening sexual life inclines, but having no real experience by which to gauge an idea of the specific sensation for which the being craves finds complete satisfaction in the erethic glow of religious ecstasy, or in æsthetic appreciation, or creative ardor, which surrounds intellectual work whatever form it takes. Especially is this true of the girl, for much less than the boy does she realize that her vague longings and aspirations have anything even remotely sexual in their composition, and she turns so much the more readily to the emotional outlets of religion and art as a means of satisfaction."

"Pleasure and pain are more keenly and widely felt. The skin becomes a new organ of the mind. Is that not the reason our young people turn to cosmetics and baths and all the dermal stimulation to which young people are so prone? Then there is the sense of taste. There are the new drinks, those horrible chemical stimulations, sweetened and colored, which young people drink. This is a mark of desire, an attempt to satisfy new hungers. There is an increased sensitivity to smell with all that it means to love life, the perfumes, the musk with which youth saturates itself." [3] All feelings are more intense whether they are joyous or depressing, and they are likely to give rise to meditations of unexpected profundity about life and death. This explains why youth can give itself to its ideals and its desires, its salvation or its destruction, with an intensity and abandon characteristic of no other period of life. It is probably the most strategic time in determining whether the ways of life for the future shall be those that lead on to ever-increasing development, or those that tend to close the personality in upon itself.

Not only must the adolescent learn to live with the new urges of her being and the emotions that accompany them; she must deal also with the feelings of insecurity and strain that are likely to come with all new experience. She may find it necessary to make changes in many areas of life at the same time. She may go away from home to school. There she must adjust herself to different living arrangements, food,

[3] Van Waters, Miriam, *Youth in Conflict*, p. 224.

and hours. She may make new friends, and face different standards of value. She may take a job for the first time, with its new demands of responsibility and its accompanying weariness. She is no longer isolated and protected, as were many of her elders. There are few secrets hidden from her. The knowledge her parents refuse her, she can have from her companions, from the movies, from magazines, and even from the billboards. The old controls of fear no longer have the meaning for her which they had for her elders. She knows too much of celestial geography to be frightened by the threats of hell. In the light of post-war history, she sees too many of the mistakes of the past to hold in reverence the codes of her elders, or to be moved by their ideals. She knows too much of preventive and prophylactic measures to control her sex life on the old basis of fear of consequences. In the words of *The Younger Generation,* "Our curiosity is at once terrible and divine. And we pride ourselves on having few inhibitions when it comes to finding out those things we want to know. We are told that sex is dangerous and sacred and vulgar and taboo. And we are just as curious to find out why it is sacred as why it is vulgar." [4] In all this experimentation, she does not have the incentive of standards and ideals suited to the world in which she lives. Her new knowledge usually outruns the development of an understanding or purpose that would assure its wise interpretation or use.

The adolescent today is also constantly exposed to the pressure of the complex life of which she is a part. In the house in which she lives there is little time for

[4] Benson, Eleanor, *The Younger Generation,* p. 80.

her or her contemporaries to be alone. She has little chance to live any part of her days without surveillance. She is continually played upon by the interests and emotions of whatever other members make up the household. At school the girl studies and reads and recites with other people, all of whose personalities in one way or another influence her. Even in the best-equipped college dormitories, suites of rooms are often so arranged by the girls that all the cots are in one room, all the dressing tables in a second, and the study tables in a third. She is not alone even when she is asleep. Such extra-curricular interests as sororities, competitive athletics, annuals, elaborate social events, which were once largely restricted to college, are being rapidly pushed down into the high school years. Stimulating recreation is open to all, with no age limitations. Even the best of recreation and of culture is available prematurely. The development of the girl, in the midst of all this, is likely to have the quality of a hothouse plant and to result in the tired or bored girl of eighteen or twenty, who sees nothing interesting ahead for the rest of her life. There could well be applied to her the response of a three-year-old who, when she had been irritable and fretful, was asked what was the matter, and answered, "Mother, you are giving me your tiredness."

DECREASE OF CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

This increase of stimuli is made more difficult because it is accompanied by a decrease in the opportunities for creative expression. There is so little for

the girl to do at home. There are maids or delicatessens that are more efficient than the attempts at cooking a girl may make. There are fewer barns or backyards in which to give theatricals; and it is much harder to secure an audience, now that movies are all day performances. The radio is so accessible that a person does not need to learn to play a piano or a violin in order to provide the group with music for dancing or general entertainment. It is much easier to go to the movies than to go hiking or swimming. There are always "teams," professional or amateur, to watch from the sidelines. In school, a girl does not need even to ask questions, for the teacher or professor tells her all that is necessary to pass the examinations. Even if she goes to college, she spends the first years in absorbing the traditions and information necessary to collegiate standing, and so is inoculated against any desire to follow some interest of her own that might be open to her by the time she is a junior or a senior. In her vocation, the usual job does not offer much incentive to originality. And so the adolescent today faces all the adjustments of another generation, intensified by the complexity and pressure of modern life, and without the protections and sanctions of another age.

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CHAPTER II

UNDERSTANDING ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOR

A FIRST essential to understanding adolescent behavior is the recognition that, however erratic it seems, it is the result of some need or desire. Conduct is the means by which the individual tries to get what she thinks she needs or wants, or tries to escape from what she wishes to avoid. What any specific behavior contributes to the individual is not always obvious from an examination of the behavior as such. To discover this purpose in behavior is not easy for the girl or for her leader. However, adolescent behavior can only be understood when the leader can distinguish between the symptoms and underlying causes of any difficulty.

SYMPTOMS *vs.* ROOTS OF DIFFICULTY

The relation of symptoms to roots of behavior difficulty may be illustrated by such a practice as smoking among girls, in a case where there is question both as to its propriety and its harmfulness. Waiving for the time both questions, it will be of interest to discover what smoking means to the particular girl who does it. Among the reasons will be found such as the following: it may be a practice forbidden by parents and school, and so is the thing which best represents her rebellion against tradition, and the way

by which she can most obviously register her independence; it may shock people and attract attention which she has difficulty in securing by more appropriate means: it may be a way of "keeping up with the Joneses," who belong to a social set to which she aspires and from which she has been excluded; she may need to do it in order not to be different from the group with which she goes; or it may label her a good sport, even if she does not pet or do some of the other things the crowd does; it may be a way of being popular with an important person in her group; it may be that a cigarette is something to hold in her hands to help meet the embarrassment incident to not being quite sure what to do or to say in a given situation; it may soothe her nerves when she is especially restless or tired; it may be a protest against double standards and privileges among men and women; or she may have been brought up to do it and enjoy it. In understanding these motives, it is often quite as revealing to ask the same question about the girl who does not smoke. Not smoking in a group which does smoke may be as revealing as smoking in a group which does not. She may be afraid of the opinion of her family or of some important member of the group who does not smoke; she may aspire to another set of Joneses, and feel that smoking will identify her with the group to which she does not wish to belong; she may be afraid of what the habit will do to her health; she may find it distasteful, and no source of pleasure. So the reasons for not smoking might be multiplied, and it would be

found in many instances that they are not essentially different from the motives of the girls who smoke.

It must be evident that the problem of dealing with smoking would in any given case depend upon why the girl did or did not smoke. To seek to have her give up or begin the practice would not be an answer to the difficulty involved. It is obvious that, if smoking is an assertion of revolt against tradition, to convince her that she should not smoke is only to transfer the revolt to some other area. If smoking is a means of achieving popularity, to cease smoking is to push for attainment of her end in other ways. Real help to her involves discovering how she may achieve more constructive independence than she is now expressing; how she can be popular in a way that will best express her real need for and contribution to her group; how she can overcome her insecurity and lack of poise. This analysis shows that particular conduct is usually symptomatic of something different, and something more far-reaching than the conduct itself. To deal with the given item of behavior as such is only to shift the trouble to another spot sometimes harder to deal with than the first. Medical diagnosis is the interpretation of any given symptom in terms of the root of the trouble. Rubbing a shoulder with arnica is not likely to be effective if the pain is due to a difficulty in the stomach. In like manner we must develop a technique of emotional diagnosis.

The procedure used with smoking may be used in relation to all attitudes and practices that may be causing difficulty. We ask the same question: Why

does the girl do it? Why does she rouge? Why does she pet? Why does she wear certain kinds of clothes? Why does she play bridge? Why does she refuse to go to church? Why does she stay out late at night? Why does she disagree with her parents? The girl's attitude and purpose in doing whatever she does; in other words, what it means to her, is a major factor in determining whether it is for her sound or unsound. It is more effective to help her discover what satisfaction or dissatisfaction any particular practice secures for her, and how she may more appropriately find what she really wants, than to try to eliminate the practice as such. When no longer necessary to her, the practice will usually disappear. Conduct is the means by which the individual tries to get what she thinks she needs or wants, or tries to escape from what she wishes to avoid. In order for a girl to decide what to do on a matter concerning which she has a question, it is important for her to face frankly why she wants to do it. If she is to have the confidence to dare to do this, she must be able to count on the understanding and patience of adults.

Even when a girl is most willing to ask for help, she is likely to seek aid on the symptoms rather than on the real roots of the difficulty. We are all too familiar with the girl who tries to find a problem or create a difficulty that will attract the attention of the person she admires from afar. The problems any girl is able to formulate are often symptoms, because the real difficulty is too painful to face, and so is covered by her willingness to deal with something less vital. There

is a story from the long ago of a woman who met, at a well in Samaria, a man to whom her spirit reached out for help. She began the conversation by a question as to the relative values of Gerizim and Jerusalem as temple locations. Jesus is reported to have answered with characteristic insight, "Go, call thy husband." And the story gives the remarkable results of that day's facing of her real problem, because he was not led into a discussion with her of the subject of her first query. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick tells of a girl who came to him because she had lost faith in God. After she had talked for some time about her religious questions, he said, "Now tell me about your love affair." Astonished, she said, "How did you know?" Then she told him her real trouble, and he was able to help her to meet it, instead of discussing the philosophical questions, which were only manifestations of her real difficulty, and the only formulation of it she could make. On the other hand, the older girl who comes to talk about love and marriage often is a girl who has not developed the capacity to fall in love. Her question often proves to be a cover for some other difficulty, which is too painful to be admitted, such as relationship with her parents, friendship with another girl, or inability to make good on a job. She comes to talk about her interest in boys or her desire to marry; but it will be discovered that she has made no effort to know or to meet boys. She is saying to the person who understands that she wishes she could *want* to know boys as other girls do. If she does not understand her real problem, she is likely to be a person

who thinks of marriage as the relationship that will automatically solve the difficulties she has not been able to meet otherwise.

Much has been written about the prevalence and painfulness of religious doubt in adolescence.[1] It may be safely said that most of the intellectual doubts and difficulties of the adolescent have their roots in other than "the intellectual apprehension of logical inconsistencies." [2] Especially true does this seem to be of the doubts that have to do with such questions as the meaning of life and the universe, and the place of authority and loyalty in a growing experience. Psychologists have been far too slow in recognizing the relation between the disillusionments and disbeliefs of adolescence and the adjustments necessary to growing up in the adolescent years. When a girl is kept awake over the story of the Creation, or of Jonah and the whale, or the Virgin birth, it is likely that her anxiety has more to do with her relationship to a family to whom her new ideas mean lack of loyalty than to historical criticism or scientific attitude. When a girl has lost or cannot find God, she may insist upon

[1] The following quotation is typical of the misunderstanding of the religious doubts of adolescence. "In cases where religious feeling has developed, and has been acted upon, as by joining the church, and later doubt comes into play as a result of wider reading and observation, we find very serious and painful mental conflicts. If proper adjustment cannot be made, such a conflict may lead to great unhappiness for the individual, even to suicide. Such a state of affairs is most likely to arise when an adolescent of unusually good intellectual gifts is brought into contact with systematic knowledge which appears in contradiction to previously accepted doctrines. The study of biology, of history, of geology, for instance, may induce a conflict in a religious adolescent, which in turn may lead to chronic tension, from which the mind must escape by some means or other." Hollingworth, L. S., *The Psychology of the Adolescent*, p. 161.

[2] Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 116.

a discussion of fatalism or determinism, or of how God can be all-loving and all-powerful; but, in almost every instance, the difficulty proves to be disillusionment or loss of security or satisfaction in some fundamental relationship of her life. Her real question is, "How can there be a God if this [failure in a job, disappointment with parents, or loss of a lover] can happen to me?" When a girl seems to be concerned with her lack of purpose or dynamic or spiritual power, it usually means that she has not found a legitimate outlet for some major interest of her life.[3]

This failure of the individual to understand her real needs goes far to explain why programs for clubs or individuals, which are built on what the girls themselves say they want to do or be, often fail to be of interest to the very persons who have made the suggestions. For that reason, it is not enough to ask girls to write down, by questionnaire or other device, what they are interested in. They give the conventional answers rather than the expression of their real needs or interests. This may happen because they feel their real desires could not possibly be met in the kind of club or group they have joined, though often the reason is that it is too painful for the individual to admit her real needs or inadequacies. To guard her from the hurt of the admissions, her organism has built protective blindnesses and misleading interpretations, which she has never understood.

Education has abetted these mechanisms of protec-

[3] Condensed from article by the author, *Religious Education Magazine*, August, 1926.

tion by putting a premium on her concealing the things she does not know rather than by rewarding her search for new information. Long before the child has gone to school, she has usually learned that it will cause her embarrassment if she asks certain kinds of questions or reveals certain kinds of curiosity and that she will get along better if she pretends to be what is expected of her. Only as the wider interpretation of experience is used in understanding what is back of expressed desires is there any chance that real needs will be provided for. The method of merely asking girls what they want to do, often claimed to be important in the interests of democracy, reveals the leader's ignorance of what democracy involves. It fails because the girls do not so easily know what they really want, and because they can discover their real interests and needs only by earnest search. Their response to a leader's insight into the needs back of their requests, and to her suggestions as to what might be of interest may often lead to a sounder discovery of their actual desires.

THE ORIGIN OF ADOLESCENT HABIT PATTERNS

Another aid to understanding adolescent behavior is a recognition of the fact that it has connections with the pre-adolescent experience of the girl, and will be fully understood only as its connection with this experience is discovered. The adolescent's ways of acting have usually been characteristic in her earlier years, and by the time she has reached her teens, she has had a great deal of practice in whatever conduct pat-

terns are characteristic of her. In adolescence there is therefore an intensification of the earlier behavior, or other manifestations of it. To understand her present conduct, we need to see its origin in her relations with her parents, and in the experiences of her early childhood.

The way the pattern develops may be understood if looked at in terms of what may happen when a baby does something which causes inconvenience or discomfort to its mother. The baby may have pulled down things from the table as often as the patience of that day could endure. She may have been slapped, as a reminder of the inappropriateness of her acts; she may have been scolded until she or her mother won out, or until her mother resorted to some more strenuous form of punishment; she may have been shamed for being a "naughty" girl, or may have been told repeatedly what the neighbors will think of her for such actions; or she may have been appealed to on the basis of how bad her conduct makes her mother feel. The fear of being slapped, thus developed in these early experiences, may be transferred later to other realms, and the girl may be afraid to begin things lest she get hurt in doing them, although she is able to put through anything which some one else has started. Because she dare not take the initiative, which may result in an emotional slap, she may always have to prod some one else to make the motions in a meeting, or to give the suggestions which are really hers. Thus she builds up a protection against

the hurts that may come from her attempts at initiative and self-expression. Or, as a result of being shamed for her conduct as a little girl, she may as an adolescent continuously feel that there is something about her of which she should be ashamed, or she may live in constant fear of being ridiculous, thus having the bogy of what other people will think to face whenever she tries to do anything. Or, because of the repeated emphasis upon her mother's feeling, she may as an adolescent, confuse any issue which she may have to face by considering always what it may mean to others' feelings. Consequently, she becomes unable to look at the issue objectively, or to make a decision on the basis of the elements in the situation itself.

The control of life on the basis of what a loved one feels about it is particularly difficult for the adolescent to escape, because it is so closely related to the struggle she is having to break away from her family and to become an adult in her own right. The girl who has been appealed to over and over again to act on the basis of her mother's feelings easily becomes the adolescent who is guided completely by what is considered best by a person she loves and admires. A little boy had been taught not to touch the radio because his mother did not want him to do it. The mother came into the room on one occasion to find him playing with it. When she remonstrated with him about his action, he answered naïvely but honestly: "But, Mother, I didn't know you were here." The

prohibition had no relation in his mind with the effect of his tampering with the connections, but only with the way his mother felt about it. So adolescent girls often play up to a leader without any reference to the character of what they do or avoid doing. One group of girls, who admired its leader, discovered that she did not like to have them include a certain kind of gossip in their club meetings, so they worked out an elaborate sign language to announce to one another her arrival that they might protect her from having to hear what she did not like. It is all too rare to find an adolescent girl who has learned to look at the elements of a situation itself and to make a decision on the basis of these facts. And yet maturity involves this decision.

None of these various patterns of conduct, which we may trace through many phases of a girl's life, grows up from any one experience, unless some one experience is unusually weighted with strong emotion; but repeated experiences of the same type do build up the habits and the disposition which characterize different personalities. The things that had most influence in making her what she is are by no means always the things that seem most important from an adult point of view. They are the things that are important to her at her particular age. It is for that reason that having bright and popular sisters, or being stodgy, or having too large a nose or hands at fourteen may have an exaggerated importance in the determination of conduct. If the girl has not been able to compete successfully with "goodness," there is little left but to gain attention by being bad. If she cannot hope to secure

attention by being good-looking, there is the realm of scholarship in which to forget other handicaps.

It is evident then that only as we can deal with the adolescent girl in relation to the social heritage of her family and earlier school experience shall we be understanding and helpful. The study of environmental influences is revealing how one girl is the kind of person she is because she was born into her family instead of the family next door or into one on the other side of town; because she went to one school instead of to another; because she played with one group of children rather than another; because she was the youngest child instead of the oldest, or because she was the one in the middle of the family; because she was not considered pretty, or thought she was not attractive when she was fourteen, or because she had a sister or brother who was very bright or very reliable or always an example of what the family approved. This makes necessary treating each girl as an individual in the light of her personality, characteristics and needs. She can be helped to build new types of conduct only as the way her present disposition has been built out of her early experience is discovered. It is because of this uniqueness of each person that any standardized group treatment is often so inadequate.

ORIGINAL NATURE

Having granted that the adolescent is what she has learned to be from the experiences she has had since birth, the question arises as to what differences there

are in the native equipment with which girls are born. Whatever theory of instincts may be held, it is increasingly being recognized that the human organism at birth has fewer fixed tendencies than was formerly supposed. People do differ in their physical vitality and their sensitivity to certain types of stimuli. This difference in original make-up may mean predisposition to certain physical difficulties and to certain emotional reactions, and does mark limitations in the development of the individual. It may involve physical and intellectual handicaps which are factors to be reckoned with in adolescent adjustments. But it does not determine in any narrow sense of fixed patterns what specific traits shall be developed, what habits shall be built, or what interests shall be chosen. In other words, the person with a narrow chest may develop tuberculosis more easily than another, but there is no reason, usually, why she should not be a reasonably healthy individual. The person who is tone deaf has little chance of succeeding as a musician, but there is a wide range of other possibilities open to her. The girl with high metabolism may be for that reason more physically aggressive but that initiative can be used either for social or antisocial ends according to the way it is directed. It will be necessary therefore in understanding the adolescent girl to know not only the physical or intellectual limitations, which are native to her, but also the things which have happened to her at birth and since she was born.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

In order to understand the adolescent girl, it is not enough to see how behavior patterns grow out of previous experience. We need to recognize also that a girl at adolescence may be behaving in ways characteristic of an earlier stage of development. Because the girl often fails to make successfully the transition from one stage to another there may be, in adolescence, infantile or childish behavior not consistent with her age. To understand such conduct when it is present it is necessary to know something of the stages of development through which every child goes in growing up to emotional maturity. In speaking of these as separate phases we do not mean that each is exclusive in itself. All of them persist in some measure throughout life. Yet it is true that emphasis on different aspects of development are consistent with special stages of life and may mark progress or delay in an individual's growth towards full selfhood.

This process of growth begins with the infant's learning that her body belongs to herself. At first her hands and feet are unrelated objects. They must be made a part of the self. This interest in discovering her own body extends very normally through the early years when the child finds satisfaction in pointing out to admiring or disconcerted onlookers that the various parts of her body are objects of admiration. This is the normal period of "showing off," which should be superseded by other types of interest and achievement. Often the attitude of her elders in showing more ap-

proval of a sister's prettiness or their condemnation of her interest in the sex parts of her body have tended to create a conflict or sense of shame which the child cannot understand but which may tend either to exaggerate or to delay the normal outgrowing of this narcissistic interest. Excessive bidding for attention by showing off physical charm in adolescence by extreme dressing or the use of cosmetics may be a delayed manifestation of an interest of childhood.

A second stage of development emphasizes the girl's relations to her mother and father. When the child is in the mother's womb it is completely identified with her. The very fact of being born means a deprivation for the child of this first relationship. The shock or the ease of birth is now being claimed by some psychiatrists as one factor which influences the child's later reactions to life. From the time of birth, the girl must achieve a relationship with her mother as a part of the external world to which she must adjust herself. The mother is for her both a source of satisfaction and of deprivation and she must relate herself to both experiences. Her character will be made of her reactions to both. If there is too much neglect or if there is overconcern, a conflict is set up between the child's self and her world that tends to cause anxiety and irritability and that delays her reaching out to a widening circle of people and experiences. Emotional development has close parallels to under- and over-physical feeding. We are just now beginning to understand the deprivations responsible for such maladies as emotional rickets. In the early years, so much learning takes

place that it is easy to understand why many are convinced that the important emotional patterns of the child's life are formed very early and that the mother's is usually more important than any other influence.

The child has to learn to adjust herself not only to her mother; the father also is a source of both satisfaction and deprivation. He affects the child not only directly by his relations to her but also by his relations to her mother. If the responses of the father and mother to her are contradictory, the problem of what she will do with these inconsistent attitudes tends to intensify the conflict the child has to resolve within herself in regard to things she can or cannot do. If there is strain or tension between them, there is conveyed to her a sense of insecurity and danger that unless it is corrected may make her fearful the rest of her life.

A number of other people have to be taken into account. There may be older brothers or sisters, or a new baby may arrive and change entirely the girl's status in the family. Then there are her playmates, who figure very largely in her childhood world. Very soon these other individuals, who look out at the world from somewhat the same level of inexperience, must be related to herself. There is probably for the child little distinction between the sexes except that caused by the attitudes of her elders. The problem is establishing a satisfying relation with her fellows. Again this area of experience may mean a growing confidence in herself or a growing sense of insecurity. If she cannot succeed with her playmates, she may either lord it over

them or run away from this threatening experience to any available security. Many a child runs home to her mother, not only on the first day and in the first year of school, but she continues to run away from her playmates, or from whatever may be the difficulty, by getting sick when things are too much for her, or by showing a preference for adult company, or by retreating into a world of her own imagination and fancy. If her experience with those of her own age repeats the earlier experience with her parents, the first patterns of response become the more deeply rooted. If the experience with her fellows has a more satisfying outcome, the earlier patterns may be modified or changed. During this period of development the sense of achievement comes in large measure through the common enterprises that are undertaken and carried out by groups of children together. What deprivation at this period may cause is sometimes seen in the exaggerated desire to play which persists in the "kittenish" women of thirty-five. The opportunity for satisfying activity is, therefore, a more important element of experience at this stage than later.

With the physical and emotional changes of adolescence, individuals become more important to the girl. She then chooses special friends of her own age, or older than she, as the objects of concentrated interest and affection. She begins to think of boys as boys. She needs to assert herself to make sure that the new self, which is the resultant of her heightened powers, is really hers. This trying out of a new self must be car-

ried on in a world whose adult members may find it amusing or annoying.

Adults, therefore, must realize that adolescents are at varying degrees of emotional maturity and at various stages of growing up. Constructive relationship involves an understanding of these immaturities but, at the same time, assistance in growing out of them. People do not grow up emotionally with nearly so much symmetry as uncritical judgment might assume. Most people are grown up only in spots. There are strange discrepancies between chronological and emotional age, between intellectual and emotional maturity. Many a person is more mature at sixteen than is another at thirty; and some one else is less mature at sixteen than is another at eight. The highest school grades do not necessarily mean the greatest ability to use or to control the emotions. The girl who stands highest in her class is not necessarily the one with whom it is easiest to live or work. In fact, education has seemed in the past to be peculiarly blind to the fact that equipment for life is made of the stuff of the emotions as well as of the intellect. Schools have given grades and diplomas as evidences of students' ability to carry through rational processes without recognizing that much of life is made or broken by the things that never come within the range of rational consideration. For that reason, there has been, and still is, an added responsibility placed upon the leaders of extra-curricular and voluntary activities and organizations to help meet the emotional problems of indi-

viduals and groups in order to provide for the lacks in this realm.

FUNDAMENTAL NEEDS OF PERSONALITY

A third factor in understanding adolescent behavior relates to the fundamental needs of every individual: —the right to be an achieving personality and to be of worth to others in the world. In other words, these two basic hungers in the emotional realm are the need to do something that brings a sense of achievement and the desire to be loved and accepted by some one who is important. In adolescence we find these hungers intensified. Emotional self-preservation is more important because of the new self which is just in process of becoming; her love needs are more insistent as her sex nature matures. These hungers are evident at every stage of development. To watch a baby just able to walk is to see the operation of these two fundamental needs. It will snuggle up to its mother to be held or protected or petted. If the mother answers this need, in a brief time it will wiggle away from her to do something which attracts its attention or imagination. The time of alternation between these two expressions varies with the age of the child. Either being held too long or being urged to play too long gives discomfort and is met with resistance.[4] Deprivation of or overemphasis upon either the holding or the wiggling is soon seen to be accompanied by restlessness and rebellion which, while they may change their form,

[4] We are indebted to Doctor Thaddeus H. Ames for this illustration.

will persist through all the later stages of growth of the child. Adolescent exaggeration of conduct may be a later form of the rebellion of the child at never being allowed to get loose to do the things she wanted to do, or the protest against growing up before she had known the comfort of actually being accepted and loved by her mother.[5]

Whenever an impulse is met by inhibition, there is likely to be built up a feeling of anxiety which may manifest itself in later life as a tendency to worry even over non-essentials. Being told not to do things, too easily is interpreted by the child as a sign that she dare not trust her own impulse or will. The result of this distrust is the development of a sense of shame or guilt that makes it difficult for her to act spontaneously or to stand on her own feet in later life because she has lost her right of self-respect. Leaders too often fail to recognize how important for the whole future development of the girl is her need to feel herself a person who matters in the world of persons with which she must relate herself, and who can honor her own impulses and desires. How fundamental this need is,

[5] "The lack of such love during early years may give rise to a lasting sense of injury, a permanent feeling of a void or loss in some essential aspect of emotional life leading in its turn to an insatiable craving for affection that was not forthcoming during the period of growth in which it was so urgently required; or, again, it may cause a lifelong bitterness or hostility towards parents (and through them towards mankind in general) for having withheld the love, appreciation and encouragement which the young child so much desires and needs; or once again, it may lead to a turning inward of the childish affections when these meet with no response so that the individual becomes self-centered and narcissistic, bestowing solely on itself the interest and affection which under happier circumstances would have been available for the pleasure and profit of those with whom she comes in contact; or finally, it may lead to serious delinquency or be responsible for a whole career of crime." Fluegel, *Psychoanalytic Study of the Family* p. 221.

we recognize when we see what happens to the woman who has never had this recognition from the world in which she must live. If she has always been Mary's sister or John Dale's daughter or Jim Smith's wife she may never have come into possession of herself in any way that will enable her to make a creative contribution. One of the amazing things about the personality of Jesus was his confidence in himself which was so inexplicable to those around him that they called it blasphemy. Probably the most destructive thing that can be done to any personality is to take away from it the self-respect that is the mark of the integrity of personality as such. Under these circumstances the organism of the individual may provide her ways of living in a dream-world life in which she can keep herself alive. However much this unreal living may unfit her for participating in a real world it is still better than the disintegration of the self that might otherwise happen. Some of the mechanisms of escape and salvation we shall consider more in detail later. It is sufficient at this point to recognize the purpose they serve.

We need to keep in mind three general principles regarding the manifestations of behavior with which we have to deal. First, aggressive or withdrawing behavior in the emotional realm is a protective measure used when the individual is in the presence of that which means difficulty or danger, just as the physical organism automatically protects itself from physical danger by fighting or by running. Which of the two—aggression or withdrawal—will be resorted to by an individual it is impossible to predict until one or the other type is

used often enough to be called characteristic of her. The glandular equipment and basic metabolism of the body probably have some determining influence on which method will be used. So we find some children who from earliest infancy meet deprivation or discomfort with aggressive protest or anger; others meet it with conformity or withdrawal. Each type of conduct may be used by the same individual, but under different circumstances.

The second principle is that the deprivation or overindulgence of the needs of any stage of growth is likely to mean a "fixing" of the personality at that stage and the consequent delayed growth to maturity. The child who has had an over amount of care or been neglected too much usually has difficulty in making contacts with other children because she will not risk with them the things she so much wants. The girl who has had too much or too little affection is likely to be dissatisfied with companions of her own age because she is still the little girl who wants her parents and cannot be interested in anything else because of the intensity of her desire.

A third principle is that where development is delayed, the later stage must carry not only the emotional energy of the normal period, but that greater amount which comes with the maturing physical vitality of a later stage. For that reason the adolescent still holding to the need for a mother puts into the substitute relationship with another girl not only the child's need for affection and response, but the adolescent energy that should work itself out in hetero-sexual relation-

ships. So delayed responses are usually accompanied by the exaggeration of the emotion that is normal to its own stage. This will be more clearly seen as we later analyze the intense emotional relationships commonly known as "crushes."

ATTITUDE TOWARDS EMOTIONAL DIFFICULTY

It is true that to a vast number mental disease still suggests merely such blanket explanations as hereditary taint or overwork while delinquency points back to equally general notions of original sin. However, just as it is easy to feel no condemnation for the child who cannot walk as well as other children because the nurse dropped her as a baby and her spine was twisted, so also it is possible to be patient with the child who is afraid to do anything new because the nurse scared her by shutting her in the dark and telling her of the things that would "get her if she didn't look out." There is coming a realization of the things that make for poverty of spirit in the most favored circles. We are beginning to understand the things the "poor little rich girl" has to face because she has too much done for her just as we are finding what deprivation of things can do for another.

Even recently these emotional difficulties of adolescence were considered moral shortcomings; consequently they received a condemnation that made it impossible to treat them objectively. It is, however, a relatively short time since the same kind of condemnation followed many physical handicaps. A pain in the

stomach was supposed to be evidence of the work of an evil spirit who must be exorcised. The moral responsibility for physical handicaps was revealed in the question "Who has sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" With our increased knowledge of the causes and controls of physical difficulties our whole attitude of condemnation of physical ills has shifted to one of sympathetic prevention.[6]

We are just at the beginning of as great or greater results in the removal and control of mental and emotional handicaps as we have witnessed in the realm of physical liabilities. With our new knowledge is coming a new attitude towards those manifestations in disposition and conduct which were once explained as due to the total depravity of original nature. As long ago as 1870 Samuel Butler, with his discerning irony, pictured a state of society where the present attitudes towards physical and emotional difficulties were just reversed. In the land of Erewhon, which he described, it was a criminal offense to be afflicted with any physical ailment. If an individual were subject to colds or measles, he was apprehended and put in a community prison for the protection of the rest of society. If the affliction was especially flagrant, as in the case of a man suffering from tuberculosis, he was given a heavy sentence, such as life imprisonment, because he was so much the greater danger to his fellows. In the same land, lapses of the disposition were conditions calling for sympathetic and skilled help. It was quite proper in the morning, if he had shown signs of irritation, to

[6] Van Waters, *Youth in Conflict*, p. 173.

greet a friend by saying "How is your temper this morning?" as we say "How is your health?" There were provided "family straighteners" for the care of such afflictions. In the case of a man who had gone so far in difficulties as to embezzle his mother-in-law's money, the treatment was comparable to a major operation for physical difficulties; but a sympathetic family and neighbors stood by to speed his recovery.

There is a new determination that people shall not go on living with the deprivations and inferiorities that have cramped and killed the spirits of many in the past. There is coming to be a realization of how serious are the shackles of guilt and of fear, even if they have no reality outside the experience of the one who has built them for herself; and with the knowledge of how they have come to be, we are finding how they can be broken. We are discovering that even physical blindness may sometimes represent protection for the individual from the things she does not dare emotionally to see or admit and that it is possible to help people to dare to see the realities and still live. Methods are being worked out by which the compulsions and tyrannies of love may be changed into growing self-determination and control of free activity, and by which energy may find creative expression rather than turn in upon itself to bruise and fetter the personality. Thus we are coming to the recognition that a more wholesome life is possible for all adolescent girls. It is for the achievement of this more abundant life that our attention should be given.

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CHAPTER III

THE MAJOR ADJUSTMENTS OF ADOLESCENCE

EVERY adolescent girl is face to face with four major adjustments: she must achieve her freedom from her family; she must establish her relationships with the opposite sex; and she must decide about a vocation, either in or outside the home; and she must achieve some unity in her own personality.[1]

The achievement of freedom from home and the establishment of an adult relation with her parents are perhaps the most basic. Up to adolescence, she has been a member of the family, and as such could lean back upon whatever security and protection it offered. Now she must be weaned from this dependence, and become a person whose conduct and opinions are her own, for which she is responsible. She must become free enough of her family to be able to leave it for a home of her own. An adolescent both wants to be independent and is afraid to risk that independence. Consequently, she is likely to assert her total disregard for her family's opinions and standards, and, at the same time, to fear her own because of the conflicts they raise. These conflicts are evident to some degree in most families. They show themselves in differences as to the clothes the girl will wear, as to the

[1] See fuller discussion of these adjustments, Hollingworth, L. M., *The Psychology of the Adolescent,* Chaps. III, IV, V and VII.

books she will read, as to the hours she will keep, and as to the companions she chooses. The money she spends and the boys she likes, the things she does at home or away from home, and the vocation she is interested in, all these may cause conflict with her parents. The girl's parents may seem to her "old-fashioned" or "mid-Victorian" in their ideas on dress and recreation, in their moral standards, and in their religious beliefs. These expressions of differences on the part of the girl and her parents often are accompanied by nagging, indifference, or criticism, which tend to make increasingly difficult the development of understanding between the generations.[2]

Fathers and mothers are often less wise than the mother bird, who tears up the nest in order that the young may have to fly. Indeed, human parents often make the choice of flying particularly difficult, by making the nest more attractive or comfortable in order to keep the fledgling at home, or by appealing to her conscience, on the basis of loyalty to those who have done so much for her. The things that have been done for her, not because she chose to have them, but because it gave the parents pleasure to indulge her, are fetters to prevent her leaving. At times the girl's own attitude makes achieving her independence diffi-

2 "By some the desire to overthrow the parental authority is explained by laxness of moral training—by the absence of true religious education; by others it is called the madness of the age, while by others, indication of flapper psychology. One is inclined, however, through the medium of stories brought to us, and through contact with individuals of the older generation, to believe that this type of emotional reaction to issues of parental authority is not new, but is an age-long response on the part of the child, who blindly and emotionally seeks to throw off the yoke." Marion Kenworthy in *Concerning Parents,* p. 125.

cult. She may prefer to have her parents do things for her rather than take the responsibility of the initiative upon herself.

Parents often make the sound achievement of independence unnecessarily difficult for the girl for reasons they may never recognize. Sometimes they have no other interest but the girl on which to express their energy and emotion; to "give her up" to other relationships or environment is to lose that which cannot be replaced. Often they do not realize the extent to which their desires for the girl or their denials of her are related to the things they have missed or regretted in their own lives. A mother may insist upon her daughter's wearing pretty clothes to satisfy her own need for "prettiness," in the only form she can give assent to striving for it. If her own marriage has cheated her out of the things she has wanted to do outside of the home, she may insist upon a career for the daughter instead of marriage. Wherever there have been deeply felt or resented deprivations in the parents' lives, they are most likely to insist upon the children's chance at these particular things, without realizing that such a projection of their own needs is just as much a violation of the child's personality as were their parents' insistences for them.

Often the girl is unaware of the extent to which the prohibitions grow out of the parents' genuine fear that she may be hurt or have to face difficulty from which they would make any sacrifice to save her. It is difficult for them to realize that she is no longer a baby who must be protected or a little girl who must be

looked after and directed. They may oppose her vocational or marriage choice because they wish to save her from going through the kind of difficulties they foresee for her, in fact or in imagination. Their concern over her attitude toward their religious faith may reflect the extent to which this attitude arouses fear because it threatens the basis of confidence or security provided by their religion. Part of their fear may come from the fact that they have had no opportunity to share the girl's new experiences. That which is strange to them, they fear for its very strangeness; or they may estimate it on the basis of rumor, and gossip, or from pictures on the screen, and in current literature. More often, however, this uncertainty or fear will be registered in those areas where life has been difficult for them, or where they themselves are least secure. Wherever a father and mother are in the process of making major adjustments in their own lives, their insecurity for themselves is likely to be transferred to a fear of any seeming risk the girl may take. This is especially true where parents are making adjustments to new standards of living or of social life; where parents of foreign birth are making adjustments to new racial or national ideals and customs; or where parents have moved from country to the city, and must make the adjustments from a rural to an urban form of life. They may even recognize, without putting it into words, that they have not helped the girl to know how to make independent decisions, and so they mistrust the independence she may have substituted for their control. Indeed, the very help the girl would like to have is at times refused

her under the guise of democratic control. The girl often recognizes that because of uncertainty her parents are avoiding the responsibility she has a right to ask them to share. As one girl said, "How am I to know what my mother means by what she says? When I asked her whether I could go to the Strand, all she would say was, 'Use your own judgment.' When I went, I got the devil for going." Thus the fears and the uncertainties of the parents complicate their daughter's achievement of independence.

Often the "radical" assertions of youth are their only means of protest against that which they recognize as unsound in the lives of the older generation. One girl was loudly advocating trial marriage. When pressed as to why she believed in it, she answered, "We don't really know whether we believe in trial marriage or not, but anything would be better than the things we see happening every day between our fathers and mothers, who talk most about the ideals of monogamy." The protestations or evasions which the older generation often makes in its own uncertainty are likely to be interpreted by young people as insincerity. One group of high school girls went from a party which closed at midnight to a Childs restaurant for pancakes. Leaving there at one in the morning, five of them drove until three, in the car belonging to a member of the group. The girl who had the keys both to the car and her home got in a little after three. In talking later to an older friend she said, "My mother jumped me last night for going to Childs. She knows there is no chance of doing anything out of the way

there. If I had a daughter I would want to know where she was from one to three. She didn't ask me that." Obviously those parents can not expect to have influence with their girls who show much fear about their life and its problems. In fairness it must be added that the frankness of the younger generation is often as much of a pose as that they accuse their elders of assuming. "We are all little Jack Horners, sticking in our thumbs and pulling out plums from our subconscious, and we all shout gleefully, 'What a smart boy am I.' We are blatantly egotistical about our frankness. We would as soon admit to having eczema as to having an inhibition. It is fashionable to be frank, and a flapper of today is as keen to be up-to-the-minute as the girl of yesterday, who was coyly modest because modesty was fashionable." [3]

Parents need to be helped to see that the girl's desires to live her own life and to substitute the standards and values of her contemporaries are indications of growth in her own responsibility and independence. She needs to try herself out in varieties of interests and relationships in order to find the line of her own fullest development. If she is to have a faith of her own, she must work it out through her own denials and convictions. The girl, on the other hand, needs help to understand the basis of many of her parents' protests. Many of the elements which she may now resist are the things that provide support and protection, without which she cannot live her own life. She can cast these aside with safety only when she has found that which is for her

[3] Benson, *The Younger Generation*, p. 85.

an adequate substitute. She needs to see how stupid it is to replace something of intrinsic value merely because it seems to her "old-fashioned," when the substitute may have less value and beauty. Many a girl has made the family discard some piece of really beautiful old furniture for a cheap, fashionable article in vogue at the minute. Many times she fails to see the beauty and charm in the background or experience of her parents because that type of culture has never received recognition by those whose approval she values at the time. This is particularly true of the girl of foreign-born parents.

Further, both parents and adolescents need to learn better methods in their relations with each other. If the parents would show more confidence in their children, if they would be less critical and more understanding, if they would take steps to share more genuinely in the life of their girls, they would often find a ready response. Prohibition and restriction are negative. They hinder the girl's development, and put the girl and her parents at odds with each other. Understanding and cooperation are positive. They give the girl comradeship with her parents at the time she needs their counsel and understanding.

But the girl also needs to learn a better method of getting along with the parents. In her efforts to get free from them, she adopts an antagonistic and negative attitude. Often a girl goes home from school or club and announces to her family all the things she no longer believes or does. Thus she arouses both concern for her on the part of the parents and resentment because

of the implied criticism of the parents' culture and standards. Sometimes she corrects their use of English or laughs at their manners. She is bound to meet resistance, because her parents feel that she is denying all that to them has proved worthwhile, and they are deeply concerned for her own welfare. Further, she is attacking that which gives her parents their sense of confidence and integrity. If, instead of denials, she would share with her parents her hopes and aspirations, as well as her problems and difficulties, she would bring to them the confidence they need in regard to her, and would give them the opportunity to share in her new experiences. If she would tell them some of the things which have come to have meaning for her, she would have an interesting check on what she has to put in the place of that which she denies.

The leader is more free than the girl to see the real issues at stake on both sides of the conflict between parents and children, and thus is in an advantageous position to help each to understand the other. The wise leader will seek to know parents as well as the girls. She will plan for kinds of parties and discussions where each may catch a glimpse of the capacities and values in the other which the more intimate and accustomed surroundings of their homes have never revealed. Out of such contacts can come to each a new understanding of that which matters to the other, such an understanding as will make each willing to grant to the other the freedom of achieving it in the way best for her. She will help the girls in methods of making adjustments to their parents, as well as help the parents

in understanding their daughters. The leader, as will be shown later, needs to remember that she is in the same relation to her group as parents to their children; and if she does not represent for the girls the characteristics of an understanding parent, she will increase their difficulties. But if the leader can create such an atmosphere of trust in each other that both parents and children can come honestly to share life instead of playing parts before each other, there can come to both an experience of comradeship fundamental to the building of all life.

ESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITH BOYS

Correlative in importance with the necessity the adolescent faces in achieving her independence from her family is that of establishing relationships with the opposite sex. Up to this time she has played and fought, has been friend or enemy, with boys on much the same basis as with girls. Now, something about them commences to stir up impulses within her which she often does not understand and of which she may be afraid. If she follows her impulses, she may be teased or laughed at by her family or her friends. Her uncertainty about her new feelings or her fear of being laughed at may lead her to avoid them and to devote herself to her lessons or to some activity in the carrying out of which she does not need to meet boys. It may lead her to avoid them, and yet, in her dream world, she may let herself be "crazy about" the succession of boys attracting her attention; or it may result

in her picking out one "steady," whom she jealously claims for herself, refusing to play with other boys. Whichever course she follows, she has before her the task of learning what her sex means, and what its fulfillment involves. This she must do in the face of all too inadequate information as to any of the aspects of mating and of marriage. Often she lacks the essential biological facts of sex and its functions; more often she has had no help on the psychological factors that make for her happiness in this area of life. Further, she must face the problems created by the fact that under modern conditions she is not likely to marry as soon as she is biologically ready for mating.

Whatever difficulties may arise, it may fairly be said that every normal girl is interested in boys. Like those associated with her leaving home, however, the accompaniments of this interest are often so difficult that she would rather remain in the stage where boys are to her the same as girls, or avoid them, if possible, rather than risk the embarrassments which come with heterosexual relations. The girl who professes to be uninterested in the boys of her acquaintance and who avoids the contacts with them so vital to achieving of emotional maturity may do so for various reasons. It may be that she has grown up in a home where she has had no brother, and where she has lacked any chance to play with boys or to associate with men, in the stages where there was less emotional tension involved. She therefore lacks skill in negotiating social situations in which they are included. Her elders or peers may have met her first attempts to express

the new emotion within her by teasing her and poking fun at her awkwardness or her romanticism. They may have labeled as common or vulgar experiences that to her have been spontaneous and beautiful, and she has come to feel self-conscious or secretive or guilty.[4] It may be that, in the attempt to "protect" her, parents have been over-emotional in teaching her that she must be careful in her relations with boys lest they do her harm by their desires and demands. Indeed, they may have made her feel so frightened about sex that she is afraid of normal and appropriate relations with boys because of their possible designs and desires. Especially if this fear is coupled with lack of biological information as to the facts of reproduction, it may lead her to such unnecessary agonies as fearing pregnancy because a boy has kissed her. If she has to fight such a fear, she is likely also to be unable to talk about it to any one. Thus, the most wonderful relationship of life comes to be fraught with fear and uncertainty.

When she seeks to establish relationship with boys, a number of factors may be present to cause her difficulty in her adjustment. Many a girl is afraid of boys because of a fear of sex caused by having been made ashamed or guilty because of her childish curiosity about her own genitals or those of boys, or because of her questions regarding the function of sex. Dr. Hamilton's researches [5] would tend to show that a large

[4] *Concerning Parents,* p. 157.
[5] See Hamilton, G. V., *A Research in Marriage.*

factor in the possibility of happy sex adjustments is a happy experience very early in childhood. The fear of sex is sometimes so severe as to make a girl refuse the proposal of a boy she really loves, or to lead her to keep postponing the time of her marriage. This type of conditioning can often be greatly changed by the chance to talk out with a person in whom she has confidence the things that have happened or wrong ideas that have been festering in her experience.

Another factor in the girl's problem is the perfectionist ideals of herself or of her future mate, instilled by her parents. She is led to live in a world of unreality, where she must be on a pedestal, worshipped or at least given special consideration because of her sex, or where her ideal hero, with no faults, will some day discover her, and carry off his Cinderella in a magic chariot. The real boys she knows do not fit her picture, and so none suits her. These are usually mechanisms of compensation for lacks in her own equipment of which she may be but little conscious. Her inability to meet a boy on a basis of genuine equality is likely to demand special privilege and consideration from him as a compensation.

Another form of this same lack of security is her assertion that she will never marry unless she finds some one as good as her father. If the boy had to compete with the real father it would not be so difficult; but, unfortunately, in such cases the girl is comparing her suitor with her idealized image of her father; and, more than this, she is expecting of her

suitor at twenty what her father has attained at forty-five. This need for perfection in her mate is again a symptom of her own insecurity.

Often, parents' attitudes make it difficult for the girl to reach out toward relationships with boys. If they fear to lose her to a potential mate, they may oppose, often in subtle ways, any boy who dares become a possible suitor. If she cannot assert her right to choose for herself, there is set up a conflict of loyalties and of emotions that often results in the parents' favor. Many a woman has never married because she dared not risk her parents' disapproval of the man she really loved, or because she has not been able to persuade herself that loving a husband does not involve denial of her love and loyalty to her parents. Having yielded to her parents, she is likely to refuse any other man who might later be just as real a mate on the assumption that she is still in love with her earlier suitor, whereas the real difficulty is, probably, that she still is incapable of breaking away from her parents.

But while these factors often hinder a girl's relationship with boys, we have to deal even oftener, in the present day, with the girl who is willing to try out anything in relations with boys, who demands no special considerations, and who admits to the boys no special privileges in the realm of conduct or morals. Armed with the information which largely removes the danger of pregnancy, she is as free to "go the limit" in sex relations as the boy has been in the past. She can learn the thrill of physical stimulation and excitement;

life all around her supplies the means of attaining it. There is not here space to deal with "petting" and related practices [6] but it is necessary for the girl to see the relation between the immediate thrills of physical contact and the deeper and more distant goals of married love, which she does not want to lose. When she answers, as she must for herself, the questions about indulgence in physical expressions she needs to see any practice in the light of its relation to the whole of life. Does the kiss express worthwhile experiences which the two people have shared, and for which the external act is a valid symbol; or is it a casual way of "being a good sport" or "doing what is done?" Is the contact of hands or body or sex organs the expression of a unity of life, joining interests and responsibilities, so that a man and a woman are one flesh and one spirit, or is it merely "paying one's debts" or the result of the heated excitement of alcoholic stimulants? If the physical is divorced from the other elements of experience which make for harmony and unity of personality, it is likely to lead to the disillusionment and cynicism of those who have tried out life and love to find it empty, instead of finding it a part of an experience of increasing wonder and satisfaction. There is still a tendency among girls to waive responsibility for the present because they mean some day to be different. Most of them want different things in marriage than that which the present holds. They need to know the inescapable reality of the fact that there is no magic in the marriage ceremony—that they will

[6] See Elliott-Bone, *The Sex Life of Youth,* Chaps. IV and V.

be after marriage the kinds of people they are now, unless they begin now to be different. Many girls, who would not be satisfied to have marriage a perpetual dancing date are making preparation for little else in their pre-marriage relations. Marriage is never, in itself, a solution of problems; it only intensifies present difficulties or achievements. A girl definitely needs to understand that marriage means carrying into more intimate and demanding relationships whatever habits and resources have been developed in past experience, and that, if she is to be different after she is married, she must begin to be different in the present.

CHOOSING A VOCATION

In addition to becoming independent of her family and establishing relationships with the other sex the adolescent must choose a vocation. Every normal girl looks forward to marriage, but this does not settle the question of vocation. She must take thought in regard to the work, inside or outside the home, which will call sufficiently upon her creative energy to bring her satisfaction. Only the girl who is not willing to grow up looks forward to marriage as the chance to be taken care of like a little girl, without consideration of her own part in the common adult life. The economic responsibility which women should feel, whether their work is in the care of home and children or outside the home, in some other vocation, has a very important bearing on the whole relationship of a man and a woman in marriage. The false alternative between

marriage and a career which has complicated vocational choice and preparation more for girls than for boys in the past is being steadily ruled out, as the industrialization of life is taking out of the home much of the productive work which once almost automatically went with the decision to marry. In the time when the family was the unit of production, as it was in the agricultural stage of human development, marriage meant a vocation as well as a relationship. The woman as well as the man shared actively in the production of the necessities and luxuries of life. The woman had to spin the yarn and make the clothes, to grind the meal and make the bread, to bear the children, and to provide for much of their education. The man took the boy and girl with him, side by side, into the carpenter shop or field or trade, and so had a basis for comradeship and for sharing in the life of the children. With the advent of apartments, delicatessens, restaurants, bakeries, laundries, nursery schools, and kindergartens, it is no longer economically useful for the girl to do all the things her mother and grandmother did. Along with the passing of this responsibility has gone, for women, a source of achievement and satisfaction that the past held. Their training too often has not provided for them the equipment to do anything outside the home; and so we find the pathetic line of women who have to buy amusement which some one else creates for them, and who become "tea-hounds" to fill up a life empty of satisfying employment. They may try to escape from being bored with life by spending their energies on personal adornment or at bridge or

the movies; real satisfaction in life demands that they find vocational or avocational responsibilities, which furnish the opportunities for achievement formerly found in the home.

A girl's vocational choice is often made difficult because there is a stronger pressure brought to bear upon her from her family than upon the boy, either to do the thing they have planned for her or against her doing things which they fear to have her undertake lest they be too taxing on her strength or on her social position. Many a girl has been sent to an arts college, because it is in keeping with her family tradition or because there is thought to be social prestige in the arts degree, when she has no real interest in academic studies. Could she have had training in doing something with her hands, she might have found real self-expression. Likewise, girls who are forced to work with their hands may have the kind of intellectual curiosity and interest that would make academic work really creative for them. If social standing were not correlated with certain types of vocation, it would be much simpler to fit persons to the right jobs.

It is essential that the vocational choice shall not be made on considerations external to the individual herself and without due regard to her capabilities and training. A wise choice will provide that it shall be something that an individual likes to do, in which she can express herself, and in which she can make a reasonable success. Many a boy has studied law or medicine to please his father when it was not the vocation in which his own capabilities could find their best

expression. Many people have responded to the appeal of missionary work, without due consideration of whether that which they were to do in a distant land was that for which they were fitted. Often they have had in the decision a false security that they would succeed in the place far away better than in their immediate environment, quite forgetting that it is precarious to suppose that any one who is not successful in dealing with individual and social situations on her own campus or in her own home town, will be likely to be successful under changed conditions, in a distant land. Girls, under a high sense of religious duty and of unselfish service, have gone into social and religious work, where they were vocational misfits, when the same spirit of devotion in some so-called secular occupation, in which they could succeed, would have opened up wider and more significant opportunities for service.

Vocational choice, on the basis of what one really wants and is fitted to do, is more possible for a woman today than ever before, because there are now few types of work from which women are excluded by their sex. Opportunities open to women vary with different sections of the country, but there is everywhere an increasing recognition that there are few biological factors that have a bearing on the type of vocation which a woman may successfully pursue. Men have long held the important jobs of the type which are supposed to represent women's function, such vocations as chef and tailor. Women now do executive and administrative work in many types of business organizations, run tea rooms, import coffee, manage hotels, practice medicine

and law, or serve in political offices. The list might easily be enlarged.

We formerly supposed that the type of job in which one could succeed was quite narrowly determined by the individual's hereditary equipment. Specialists were thought to be able, by tests and examinations, to determine in just what particular job an individual could expect to make a success; and there were supposedly definite sex differences. The most reliable vocational advisors at the present hold that these sex differences, so far as capacity is concerned, are largely negligible, and that, so far as native capabilities are concerned, "fifty per cent of the jobs of the world could be successfully done by fifty per cent of the people of the world, with a fifty per cent degree of efficiency." [7] With this wide range any girl will face the possibilities open to her by the circumstances of her life, by her responsibilities to others, by her preparation, and by the things that have for her the strongest emotional appeal.

Parents and leaders will help her determine the general line of her interests. She can narrow the range of her choice by determining whether she has the muscular coordinations which give skill in the use of the hand and body, whether she has the sensitivity of ear and eye and the sense of rhythm and perspective which are a part of artistic ability, whether she has the analytic and synthetic type of mind which fits her for intellectual pursuits. She can determine whether

[7] Quoted from Prof. Harry Kitson, Teachers College, Columbia University.

she does best individual performance or whether she likes best to secure the cooperation of others necessary in administrative or teaching vocations. All these things she will find by studying herself, and particularly by examining her experiences in home and school and leisure time. The things which have appealed to her as a child, the studies she does well in or poorly, her participation in extracurricular activities, the work she does in vacation times, all these help her discover what she wishes to do and can do well. She is fortunate if she has the opportunity to try herself out during vacations or in doing short time pieces of work, to discover if some one of the things which seem to be within her general line of capability especially intrigue her. With these data, she is in a position to ponder the possibilities before her and to talk them over with trusted counsellors and thus to arrive at a decision regarding her vocation. In this decision the goals of her life, the things which are to her most worth while, her concern for the welfare of others and for the advancement of the common good, will be significant factors in determining her choice.

This analysis has so far been written from the standpoint of helping the girl who has the opportunity to choose. This is not to overlook the even larger number of girls who have no choice because of financial pressure but to do what the community offers by way of employment, and who because of immediate financial demands must waive the possibility of training. For these girls the leader's responsibility may be to see what opportunities should be provided to sup-

plement the girl's training outside of her working hours, so that she may not be forced through lack of training to remain in a vocation unsuited to her. The whole adult education movement is facing both the responsibility for developing vocational skills and for finding areas of satisfying achievements outside her job, for the girl who is caught temporarily or permanently in a job which is unsatisfactory. The wise use of leisure may do much to make up for necessary monotony or specialization in a job.

ARRIVING AT A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

In the midst of the strain of the adjustments connected with getting away from home and making her adjustments to boys and choosing a vocation, it is incumbent upon her to achieve a self on which she can count. She must somehow build the uncoordinated desires and impulses of her being into a dynamic whole that will have unity and purpose. A college girl who was being urged to take a part in the solution of certain industrial and international conflicts said, "The girls I know are all at civil war inside themselves, not knowing which of their conflicting motives will survive the next fifteen minutes. Until we can find some peace inside ourselves we cannot be very effective in helping solve the conflicts of the world." This is true because the adolescent not only has the possibility of developing into one of a considerable variety of selves, but may attempt, at the cost of painful effort, to be in succession several of these incipient and mutually ex-

clusive personalities. This process may pull her in such varying directions that emotional strain and contradictory behavior are inevitable. She needs to be reassured that this confusion is in no sense abnormal or unique, but that to remain in the opportunism which may easily result from it is to miss the best things of life. She needs to understand that the kind of personality she would like to have does not come for the asking, but that it is a lifelong process in which adolescence is an important stage. "There is no need to suppose that a peculiar phenomenon called 'adolescent emotion' suddenly develops and as suddenly disappears. Adolescent instability vanishes as the thwartings, changes, and uncertainties of youth disappear, with the unification of the vocational, economic, social, and sexual selves. If the self does not become established, this emotionalism remains through adulthood." [8]

These conflicting emotions become unified in her personality as they find their relationship to those interests and desires which are coming to be central in her life. These conflicts must be caught up in relation to some goal; so that her nature achieves a real rather than a pseudo-unity.[9] Just to try "self-expression" is to discover that expression of any part of her nature without relation to the total personality is one of the most fruitful sources of disillusionment. She too often discovers that she has paid too dearly for some whistle. Many a girl is finding partial expression of her desires

[8] Hollingworth, L. S., *The Psychology of the Adolescent*, p. 192.
[9] See Elliott, *The Bearing of Psychology upon Religion.*

and interests as disintegrating as the former "repression" proved to her elders. She must find for herself a center for life and a basis for confidence that is her own; otherwise, she will drift with the crowd or accept automatically some temporary authority of adolescent experience, untempered by the tests it will have to meet. This unifying element she will find in those aspects of her home, her vocation, her social, and her community life which come to be considered worthwhile, and which determine what she avoids and to what she gives herself with abandon.

The insistent attempts of the adolescent to work out a personal philosophy of life and to answer questions of cosmology and metaphysics are closely related to her need to find her*self* and to be sure that self has a place in the universe. In order to be sure of the new self, she feels she must answer questions not only of her personal origin, goal, and destiny but of creation, death, and immortality, of space, time, and reality. If she is to be sure of herself she feels she must formulate that of which life and the universe consist. As Mrs. Hollingworth has pointed out [10] the subjects (often laughed at rather than understood) chosen for high school commencement "orations" are revealing glimpses of the interests and concerns of the adolescent. Many accept without serious question the religious explanation of the universe as worked out in the past by the church; others challenge or accept it with the vehemence which may lead, on one hand, to acute con-

[10] Hollingworth, L. S., *The Psychology of the Adolescent*, p. 162.

flict and depression or, on the other hand, to exaggerated religious practices and devotion. Because of the changing world in which she must live, the religion of her parents is most likely to break down at the point of its authority and control for her own life. This is particularly true because, possibly, at no other period of history have there been so many areas of life where the controls of the past seem inadequate, and where so many new decisions have to be made. The very speed of life today is an important contributing factor. Even the best "authority" breaks down where there is no precedent from which to draw the answer. The adolescent girl of today is part of a generation which, whether it will or not, must try to work out the solution to problems that have not been solved before. It is clear she can get little help from those who profess security in word rather than in verified experience. If the past is to bring her confidence in life or resources for it, if the religion of her parents is to mean anything to her, she must appropriate that past and that religion for herself, in her own experience. It is preferable that she should refuse the pseudo-confidence in a faith that, because it is not her own, will fail her at the time of crisis. In the past the girl has often been taught to pray for deliverance from conflict and for the gift of salvation. She must now be helped to understand what goes into the answering of her own prayers.

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CHAPTER IV

COMMON ADOLESCENT DIFFICULTIES

In helping the adolescent achieve selfhood, and develop a successful relation to the world of which she is a part, we find certain forms of frequently recurrent behavior. It may be helpful to examine some of the more common of these, to see in what ways they are evidences of inadequate adjustment, and what can be done about them. To realize some of the many possible roots of these difficulties may prevent the hasty generalizations and uses of labels that serve to condemn the girl rather than to help her.

CRUSHES

Difficulties arise very often around friendships of girls for each other or for an older person. Leaders fail in dealing with these, more often because of their lack of understanding than because of the seriousness of the difficulty. Every girl craves, not only to be popular with a large circle of friends, but to have special friends, with whom she may share her interests and affections more intimately and deeply. In the midst of these enriching friendships, most girls are, at some period, troubled by having relationships around which there are conflict and jealousy, with the accompanying strain and tension. In such a relationship, the

intimacy becomes an absorbing and limiting element, instead of one that frees and releases life.

These extreme friendships take many forms. There may be two girls between whom there is great physical attraction. They crave being physically close to each other; they sleep together whenever possible; there is great emotional tension when they are separated for any length of time; being together has a tendency to tire them, and cause them to be physically stimulated or tense. One of them is engaged to a boy whom she has known since they were both in high school, but she is not sure now that she loves him, and she refuses from time to time to set the wedding date. There may be a girl who "loves" another and writes her very passionate notes and letters, which are not replied to in kind. She insists upon spending her spare time in the loved one's presence, though, often, she has little to offer but the protestation of her affection. When the loved one is not available or is with other girls, her jealousy or melancholy unfits her to concentrate on her work, and she consoles herself by composing sad, morbid poems. Still another girl, unable to win the exclusive attention of the person to whom she feels greatly attracted, begins to develop headaches at inconvenient times. Indeed she becomes so sick that she requires care at times when the other would prefer to have gone to lectures or social events. Or, even more frequently, there is a girl who greatly admires an older or younger person, often a teacher, club leader, or upper classman, to whom or about whom she would never admit her feeling. However, the things this

older person does or says have more than usual meaning and importance to her. Failure to secure approval or notice of the loved person may cut the nerve of her effort for the whole of a day; for this girl to witness this loved person's interest in others or praise of them means her suffering from the depleting pangs of jealousy or inferiority; much of her energy goes into her dream of winning the love she craves. These illustrations could be multiplied with almost infinite variety of detail. Any one who has lived with girls in their teens, especially during their first years away from home at school or work, knows the variety of these manifestations.

The labels put on absorbing friendships vary with the community or group. They are sometimes called "crushes." In one school they are designated in the abbreviated form of "G.P.s," "grand passions." According to local attitude are they frowned upon or accepted as a mark of distinction. In some groups, a relationship labeled a "crush" is damned by its label, whatever its real basis may be. All too frequently, girls and their older friends are made afraid of any expressions of affection or emotion between themselves and others, for fear they will be marked as those susceptible to whatever weakness the labels may be considered as representing. College girls taking clubs of younger girls or going to camp as counsellors are warned against allowing younger girls to develop "crushes" on them, and so are made afraid of their own emotions. Question marks are raised about normal interests and helpful friendships by the same warnings.

Much of this misunderstanding and fear has grown up because of failure to appreciate the emotional needs and expressions of adolescence, and because of the "positive fear of the emotional naturalness that has been bred in Americans by the teachings of our Puritan ancestors."

These experiences will not be understood unless it is recognized, first, that this conduct represents the effort to satisfy an emotional desire, and that often this need has its roots in much earlier experience; and, second, that the person loved is likely to be sought out because she is a symbol of the one in the girl's experience who could have satisfied this desire. In other words, the girl is not in love with the person on whom she has a "crush," but with the individual this person represents to her. For the time, let us consider these experiences from the viewpoint of the girl who bestows the affection, quite recognizing that the problem may be complicated if the person on whom she centers her affection is also immature. This type of difficulty usually represents one of four major kinds of deprivation in the girl's experience.

Absorbing the loved one may, in the first place, represent an effort to find a substitute for the mother that the girl has never emotionally had in her earlier experience, or for the mother from whom she is now separated but who held on to her too long. As has been shown earlier, the girl who was deprived of her mother's love or approval in her earlier years is likely to prolong, even past adolescence, her search for this maternal response. Those most nearly re-presenting that

mother in appearance, authority, and accomplishment are likely to lead her to seek from them the response she has craved from her mother. Her search is for the response she has never had, or away from which she has never grown. For this reason, the homesick freshman or the girl away from home at a new job craves the goodnight kiss from the upperclassman or the club leader on whom her "adoration" is centered, or she wants to be allowed to walk home with her. She wishes to be approved by her, or she resents the success of others, who, like the brothers or sisters in her own home, win out in competing for the attention she wishes. The leader or upperclassman often fails to understand that she is important to the girl, not because of any intrinsic charm she may possess, but because she is a substitute for the younger girl's mother. If she did really understand, she might perform a much more helpful service to the one who needs to grow up than the girl's mother ever succeeded in doing.

A second reason why a given person is loved and "adored" is because she represents qualities, or accomplishments, or a position which the one doing the loving has never had, but which she has long envied. In proportion as one feels her own sense of inferiority or unattractiveness is she likely to seek to make up for it vicariously, by admiring or securing the admiration of the person who is to her the embodiment of the coveted qualities. Thus any attractive or accomplished person is likely to be particularly admired by the girl who has considered herself unattractive or unpopular. The president of the athletic association or the sorority,

the advisor of the club, the Sunday School teacher, the girl with musical ability, or with dramatic power, or the girl who is beautiful and popular is likely to be the embodiment to the girl of those qualities which she craves for herself. Finding these qualities realized in the object of her affection is to seem vicariously to have them herself. Again, the person who is thus admired can, if she understands the basis of the attachment, be a very positive factor in helping the other girl to win for herself the quality or ability she admires.

Strong emotional attachment of one girl to another may, in the third place, have its roots in an emotional crisis which a girl may temporarily be going through. One dean of women was disturbed by the fact that she suddenly became the recipient of much attention, many notes, and frequent gifts of flowers from a girl in her house. When she found out more of the girl's life, she discovered that, just when the attachment to herself had begun, the girl had broken her engagement, because of circumstance beyond her control. If the dean could meet her part of the relationship constructively, she would be affording for this girl a temporary medium for the expression of emotion whose other channels were closed up. To rebuff the girl under the circumstances would be cruel and unnecessary. This type of attachment may occur whenever a girl has to meet a loss through death of some one who has counted much in her emotional life, or has to face some disappointment or disillusionment against which she may need emotional steadying or reinforcement.

A fourth common reason for emotional difficulties in girls' relationships to one another is their failure to make the normal adolescent contacts with boys. Whenever girls lack the opportunity to know and to build relationships with boys, or are afraid of their developing sex feelings, and of men as sexed beings, the relations with their own sex have to carry an extra tension, which biologically they are not suited to carry. The continued emotional tension tends to increase the emotional demands upon each other without corresponding release. This becomes an increasingly serious problem for girls of strong emotional capacity, especially if the sex attraction between the two is marked. It may "fix" the sex response of one or both to women instead of to men, so that they do not fall in love and marry; and their love relations, even where they marry and where the physical expressions of sex are entered into, may prove unsatisfying because they are conditioned to those of the same sex. With girls who have less emotional need or capacity, the relationship represents an easier course of action than to attempt to establish relations with boys. This may result in their remaining at a stage of love development that is much less mature, and may cheat them out of the chance of marriage.

In all of these types of difficulty there may be the physical expression of emotion as it is given in kissing, fondling, embracing, sleeping in each other's arms, and even in the contact and handling of the sex organs. In most of the relationships with which we have to deal, there is probably the minimum of the physical

expression that involves the direct mutual stimulation of the sex organs themselves. There are cases, which we have not included here, of sexual perversion, where an older person seeks for direct sex gratification from younger persons; but such cases are relatively rare, and when they are found can be handled only by expert psychiatric help. With most girls the expressions are the indirect rather than the direct sex stimulations. The physical harm that results from them is rather that which comes from emotional tension in general, and from the loss of sleep through long unreleasing and unsatisfying hours spent together. Even where direct sex stimulation is sought, it is a symptom of difficulty in sex adjustment, and can not be successfully dealt with directly, but only in relation to the whole love adjustments of the individual. At times, the adolescent girl seeks in the emotional experiences of religion to satisfy these varieties of love need; but whenever she thus uses religion as a substitute and a compensation for the appropriate experiences of life, religion becomes a hindrance rather than an aid to the fullness of life.

We may have implied in this analysis that the person who takes the initiative in the loving is the younger person. It is just as likely to be an individual older in chronological age but younger in emotional development, who seeks from a younger person the satisfactions of the same needs that we have shown above. The situation is always complicated when the two people attracted to each other are both emotionally undeveloped and so increase rather than lessen difficulties for one another.

The one who is the object of another's affection, whether she is loved as a symbol or for herself, is, for that other's growth or regression, a strategic person. If she is loved for the mother another is seeking, and responds temporarily as the mother should, she can help the dependent person outgrow her dependence. If she represents admired qualities, she is the person who can best become the other's coach for her attainments. If she is sought out at a time of sorrow or disappointment, she can hold the girl steady by temporarily supplying her need for an object of her emotions. If she is the recipient of the girl's sex feeling, and understands the place of sex and sex emotion, and has herself contacts with men, she can lead the girl to a normal sex adjustment, by helping her find herself in an area where she needs reassurance and confidence. In any case, the person admired is important to the girl, and so has for the time the strategic opportunity of that import.

The girl's love for an older or more mature person is a normal stage in the process of being weaned away from her family to an independence of her own.[1] If she has been fortunate, the girl has admired and believed in her parents during childhood, and has found in them the early embodiment of what she would like to be. As the range of her experience increases, she finds in the parents of her playmates, in teachers at school and church, and in other relationships in the community, adults who win her admiration and emulation, and who supplement or even compete with the ideals her parents represent. It is in these wider ex-

[1] Blanchard, *The Adolescent Girl*, p. 54.

periences that she must first choose the ideals which are to play a part in her own life. As she reaches the place where she must give up what is external to her own personality in her former models and ideals, it is normal that she choose, outside the family circle, that person to whom she can most fully respond as a person, and who most represents what she would like to become. The fact that she makes the choice is a step in her becoming herself. Part of the picture she has may be in her own mind rather than in the actual person she admires, but it is no less effective for that reason. This transference of confidence will be helpful, if the older person understands it and handles it constructively, for she represents the temporary security and confidence which the girl needs. If the leader rebuffs her, it may tend to retard the growing process. The girl's adoration is dangerous for the girl only when the leader, like many mothers, tends to hold on to it, for her own satisfaction. Teachers and club leaders and older friends of girls have the opportunity to lead them into richer experiences of life, if they will help them to need less and less the special contribution they temporarily make, and thus enable them to leave their childish loves behind.

MASTURBATION

Another one of the common manifestations of failure to grow up or to adjust to the opposite sex is masturbation, or the self-stimulation of the genitals for the purpose of obtaining some sort of sexual gratification or

relief. It is usually supposed to be a problem of boys only; but researches of the last few years seem to show that 50 per cent of all normal women, and probably an even larger percentage, have at some time resorted to this type of sex stimulation.[2] There is not the space here to discuss this question at length.[3] Suffice it to say that most of the harmful effects formerly ascribed to the practice have been due to the sense of guilt or shame or fear connected with it. Often, the individual who practises masturbation feels she has committed the unpardonable sin, and is usually afraid to admit the practice to any one. Any girl harassed by such fear or anxiety should talk it out frankly with some one she trusts, under circumstances where she does not find shock or condemnation on the part of her adviser. She needs to realize that the practice is not a sin in itself, but a symptom of immaturity, a way of withdrawing from a more positive means of adjustment. Like any other difficulty, it may have many different sources, and some of these are not directly sexual. It may be prolonging a type of narcissistic enjoyment of her own body, that should have been left behind in childhood; it may be a way of getting solitary satisfaction, apart from the normal developments of this period in relation to the opposite sex; it may be a source of solace for disappointment or deprivation or loneliness.

The practice of masturbation may teach a girl to get her sexual satisfactions in a way that will make the normal relationships of marriage more difficult; and

[2] K. B. Davis, *Factors in Sex Life of 2200 Women*, Chap. VI.
[3] See Elliott-Bone, *The Sex Life of Youth*. Chap. IV.

it is likely to be carried to excess, and so to be harmful. In dealing with masturbation, it is necessary to discover the reasons for the practice, and to give help on the causal factors, rather than to treat the symptom directly. An explanation of the physiological facts, which cause many girls anxiety, will help. Since the practice of masturbation often grows out of a local irritation in the vagina, due to acid secretions in it, such a difficulty can be eliminated by giving a knowledge of simple douches, to allay the vaginal discomfort. Further, some girls think themselves abnormal or diseased because of the normal vaginal discharge that may follow sex stimulation of even a very indirect nature. To understand the functioning of the secondary sex glands will relieve unnecessary worry. The girl should also be made aware of the sex-tension which is inevitably a part of her development, and should be taught to think of it as something concerning which she has the right to be proud and reverent. This tension she must learn to deal with before marriage, not by denying her womanhood and its sex capacity, nor by using immature means of direct sex expression, but by engaging in satisfying creative activities and relationships.

IDEALIZATION—PLAYING A PART

Another common problem for the adolescent girl is the disillusionment which comes from the discovery that another, whom she thought of as perfect or as nearly so as a human being could be, has failed her, or has proved to have faults common to the rest of

humanity. The girl feels too often that the failure of this ideal has permanently destroyed her faith, both in human nature and in herself. The corollary of this difficulty for the leader, whether parent, teacher, or club leader, is the sense that she must be an example to those for whom she is responsible, and that, if she is not, she will lose her leadership. She is likely to feel that she must allow them to see only her strength and conceal from them her weaknesses, for the sake of not destroying their ideal of what they should become. For the leader to be an example means that she must build for herself a picture of what an example should be like, just as the girl has built a picture of what she feels her ideal must be. It would be an interesting calculation to estimate how much energy most people put into the attempts to play for the world the parts their pictures of themselves demand.

To determine how the insistence on perfection becomes a factor, constructive and destructive, in the development of experience, it is necessary to examine what is involved in the idealization of one person by another. The parents are for the child, in its earliest years, necessarily perfect. In them, she must rest her whole chance for life and security. They must know everything; they must be adequate for all her needs. How else could needs be met? Where else is knowledge? The parents must be right if there is such a thing as right. When the child is helpless, all of her security rests in the adequacies of those who are responsible for her. As the child learns to do things for herself, there is less need that others shall be omni-

present; as she comes to know how she may find out for herself, the omniscience of parents is less essential; as she comes to discover the basis of judgment and of value, absolutes of behavior and of taste are less in demand. In other words, the need and the demand for perfection are directly related to the sense of insecurity and inadequacy. The person most conscious of real or imagined imperfection in herself is most likely to demand perfection of those from whose relationship to her she may hope vicariously to supply her need. To be loved and approved by the person who is perfect is an easier way to the attainment of perfection than to make the efforts required to win it for oneself.

The projection of the ideal picture upon another is essentially a childish device, often closely related to the search for the parent who has never been available; and it is most often a reflection of the picture which fills a girl's day-dreaming hours. Her self-consciousness and fear of being herself are often rooted in her efforts to keep other people from discovering how imperfect she is, and to lead them to think of her as she in her reveries imagines herself to be. Trouble arises when the strain of keeping up the fiction becomes too great, and there is no equipment for meeting the ensuing failure. The girl's loss of faith in the person who has failed her is only a formulation of the real problem, that of losing faith in her own fictional perfection. The person who is learning how to recognize and deal with the faults of her friends is the one who is developing maturity herself. It is easier to insist that

another has no faults than to know how to help her overcome them. It is, therefore, laziness and childishness, rather than love, that are blind to faults in the person loved; and it is a sign of maturity and true mutuality when two people can recognize that—

There are also in you and in me,
As in every one else, things lacking;
A particular weapon
You cannot lay hands on;
But it happens always, luckily for us,
That I can lay hold of that weapon,
That your garden is alive with those flowers,
And that we go, without asking, the one to the other
To take what we need.

You are well aware of my wants
And of my weaknesses;
They turn to you unabashed,
You receive them and love them;
And I equally love yours,
Which are a part of your strength.

And so each of us, O my friend,
Goes and may go with assurance,
Because of a hand which is ready,
At the least peril, to turn and take hold
Of the wandering arm of the blind man
That you become, or that I become,
Like every one else, from time to time.[4]

"Idealization" cuts the very root of any real friendship or love. At best, the love based on it is built on a house of sand; it cannot know the unity and free-

[4] From *A Book of Love from the French,* Charles Vildrac.

dom which comes from sharing reality, whether that reality be for the moment joy or pain, through perfection or imperfection. Perfect love is rather that which casts out the fear of playing a part, or of being dishonest, and substitutes the confidence and security of being able to be oneself, without thought or dissimulation. This kind of love means that one loves another, not only for her attainments, but also for her possibilities; but it does not confuse the two, and lessen the chance of the realization of that which must be achieved, by the assumption that it is already present. It does not mean that the leader has no ideals towards which she herself is striving, but rather that she is able to take honest survey of the progress which she has made toward the goal she has set for herself.

The prevalence of this kind of difficulty for both girls and their leaders can better be understood as we realize the degree to which past family and religious education has given to children definite patterns of conduct, to which individuals were supposed to conform if they were to deserve the name Christian or to be worthy of approval. They have been supposed to be "good" and unselfish, and never to admit jealousy or "self-seeking." They have been supposed to be examples to their younger brothers and sisters, and to their associates. Girls, in particular, have been held responsible for their brothers' and boy friends' morals. Mothers did not share their problems, or admit their weaknesses, for fear of losing their children's respect; older people could not admit to younger ones that they did not know the answer to all questions, for fear of

losing their confidence; lovers could not admit each other's faults for fear of hurting their love for each other. And the strain of the fiction has broken many of the very relationships it sought to insure; for the honest admission of both success and failure is essential for helping one another attain ideals.

BEING SORRY FOR ONESELF

Another one of the characteristic traits of adolescent behavior is that of being sorry for oneself. This is one of the results of a variability of mood which irrationally changes the color of the world. A sense of depression and failure often has no conscious basis, to the girl who feels blue. Often, people who are important to her seem to be inconsiderate of her—unmindful of her moods of exaltation and depression, unappreciative of her worth—so that she is thrown back on herself for pity or admiration. The girl thus often builds fantastic rôles, in which she appears to her own imagination. Before adolescence, she has probably, at some time, felt a conviction that she was an adopted child, of a lineage quite superior to the incidents of her present environment. She has thought that no parents who were her real parents could be so unappreciative of her real powers and possibilities as are the ones of her daily life. It is rare to find a girl who has not been at some time a Cinderella in her own imagination. When she comes to adolescence these feelings of a lack of appreciation tend to appear in intensified forms, especially at certain times. When her sense of being mistreated is

in its intensest stages, many a girl thinks, and, indeed, often talks quite at length, of the possibility of suicide. Frequently, girls have kept the people responsible for them, as friends or older advisers, in a constant state of anxiety, lest they fail to prevent such a tragedy. One such girl is typical. She lived in a dormitory, and the girls knew that she kept a razor in her room. Once she had made a slight cut with it on her neck, and they knew of that. Whenever she did not get what she wanted, she held over them the threat that, life being no longer worth living for her, the sooner she removed herself from them the better. Needless to say, she did not make good her threat. They might have understood her better had they remembered the times they had planned their own funerals; who were the chief mourners at the event, as they pictured it; and what had happened between them and the chief mourners just before the picture. In fact, most of us, when we felt we were mistreated by our mothers or fathers, have consoled ourselves with the reflection that, when they saw us dead, they would be sorry for their actions, and wish they had been kinder to us. A sense of humor is a much more effective weapon against being sorry for one's self than any amount of other forms of discipline.

This explanation would not waive the recognition that suicide must be reckoned with, as a stark tragic fact. It is rather to remind us that seldom is it the girl who threatens suicide who kills herself. When a suicide does happen, it is usually entirely unexpected by those who have been closest to the person doing it.

To deal with suicide, we need to recognize quite a different set of symptoms from those which very often are the cause of anxiety in homes, schools, clubs, or camps.

'BUSYNESS"

Every one related to girls, individually or in groups, faces the problem of the multiplicity of things they attempt to do, and of the resultant restlessness and lack of ability to concentrate. The environment of girls, as has been pointed out in an earlier chapter,[5] is an important factor. Participation in so many areas of life is open to the modern adolescent that she needs, far more than her older friends, help in understanding how one learns to live on the twenty-four hours of the day that nature has provided; otherwise she may come to the end of adolescence with no capacity or energy for new experiences. So many of the honest attempts to make out a time budget and to live up to it have failed that there is little hope that, by such a method, real help in solving the problem may be found. Part of the solution must come in a saner handling of the environment, by those responsible for home and school programs; but even were that possible at once, the problem might persist for the girl who does not understand some of the underlying factors that tend to intensify it.

A girl thinks she must belong to many societies, serve on many committees, go to many shows, and plan something to do for any time that may happen to be free. And she does not know why she feels this way. She

[5] See Chap. I.

does not know that she may be doing all these things to keep from thinking about something which is painful, or from being alone long enough to have to face something of which she is afraid or ashamed. Until she can find some way of adequately meeting what she is really up against, she has to keep so busy that she will not have time even to think about it. It may be that she does not even know what she is putting off, and may discover it only by asking herself honestly what she would be afraid to think of if she were not busy. Patience and courage to discover and to face the things she is avoiding is the way to the solution of the problem.

A second reason for "busyness" is the fact that not any of the things which the girl does is what she really wants to do. Therefore, she does many things hoping to find the amount of satisfaction which would be afforded by doing what she really wants to do. This is not to say that she is conscious of what her real desire may be; that may be something which she cannot admit to herself, which drives her in spite of herself. If she wants some one position or office on a campus which she does not succeed in getting, if she wants the attention of some one person not interested in her, she dare not refuse anything that comes along, because it may turn out to be that which would open the way to the thing she desires. She must keep as many doors open as her energy can manage, in the hope that some one of them may offer the way to that which she most wants. This is why she needs a person who can help her interpret herself, and to find at what point she can focus her energy with the best chance of satisfying

success. Many extra-curricular or club programs fail to be really significant, because they merely increase the number of things that a girl might do, and add to her confusion, instead of helping her find and carry out that which is fundamental to her emotional development and satisfaction.

A BOSS OR A SLACKER ON THE JOB

Every group of girls knows the difficulties created by the girl who always has to have things her own way, who will not play unless she has suggested the game, and who will not work unless the enterprise is one of her own initiation. She is likely to be so sure of herself that others are afraid to oppose her; she is prone to be dominating and demanding in her personal relationships. Her ability is likely not to measure up to her declarations, but she makes it difficult for one to take issue with her, for to oppose her is to increase her determination to win on her own ground.

In seeming contrast to her is the girl who will never assert herself, or take the initiative in any decision. She may have very strong convictions about what is being done, but will never commit herself about anything until she sees that it has a chance of being approved. She is wont to assent to the majority opinion only to resist that assent when it comes to carrying out what she did not really want.

It may be a help in understanding such girls to know that both types of conduct are likely to have the same basis of fear of failure. The youngster on the street

who is afraid of his fellows often has to be a bully, and "get the jump" on them, to keep from being cheated out of what he wants. The more afraid he is the more quickly he has to jump. The more experience one has had in being made to do what some one else wants, the more likely she is to see to it that the other person's suggestion does not get a chance for consideration. The less sure she is of her opinion the more talking about it she must do to convince herself that she really believes it. It may be a safe generalization to hazard that the louder and more dogmatic the protestation of any one, the less sure is the declaimer of its verity. In other words, domination and aggression are but a protection from a fear of failure which must somehow be covered.

The opposite mechanism serves the same end. Failure and defeat are painful; therefore their occasion is avoided by never risking their possibility. To refuse to make the initial move is to forego the satisfaction of initiation, but is also to guard oneself from the possibility of failure. To move when one is sure of success is to save oneself from failure. Both mechanisms are given up, as individuals increase their confidence in themselves, by successes germane to the situation and by approvals matched to the needs of the individuals.

This consideration throws light on snobbishness and attitudes of superiority as they are manifested in individuals and groups. The protestation of superiority in any realm, like loud talking, is usually a sign of insecurity and lack of confidence. The girl most likely to criticize the social standing of her fellows is often the one

whose family is not quite accepted in the community; the club or sorority most likely to be exclusive or overbearing in relation to other groups is the one least secure in its own background or position in the institution or campus; racial and religious dogmatisms are most likely to be the corollaries of threatened privilege or authority. The really democratic girl is most often the one in whose family background there is nothing to cover or protect; the tolerant girl is the one who does not need to reinforce her opinion by the exclusion of what may challenge it. But security and confidence are not easily attained. Most people carry with them areas in which they must still use the crutches of overassertion and domination. They will give these up, not because they try to, but as they learn confidence and assurance through real achievement.

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CHAPTER V

GROWING OUT OF ADOLESCENCE SUCCESSFULLY

Adolescence is especially significant in relation to the success of the individual in later life. Even though it is but one stage in the advance toward the achievement of emotional maturity, it comes at the critical time of transition from childhood to adulthood. Maturity is by no means complete by the close of adolescence; but if growth is to continue for the remainder of life, it is important that the adjustments of adolescence be made successfully. If the girl has been fortunate in infancy and childhood, because of understanding parents and a sympathetic home, then she should be able to pass through adolescence without undue stress or strain.

A period of such important decisions is bound to have a degree of stress, comparable with the difficulty of the situation. Such emotional difficulties are not abnormal or pathological, but simply those which arise in the normal process of growing up. Where there is severe emotional upheaval, it is usually due, not to the normal developments of adolescence, but to a social situation at home or at school which is too severe for the girl, and for which her earlier years have given her unfortunate or inadequate preparation.

Whenever there is serious difficulty, there should be a physical diagnosis by a reputable physician to dis-

cover if there be a physical basis for the trouble. Without this check, there is no assurance that the girl is not carrying physical handicaps that are large factors in her trouble. Pressures on nerve centers, unrelieved muscular tensions, the over or under functioning of thyroid or pituitary glands are often responsible for an overburdening of the nervous system that works itself out in different forms of emotional irritation. It is easy to suspect the relation between an over-functioning thyroid and the over-active, restless girl; but other difficulties are not so easily discovered. Until the physical difficulty, if one exists, is corrected, there are undue handicaps in dealing successfully with the emotional disturbances as such.

There are some cases of deep-seated difficulty with which no amateur will attempt to deal, any more than she would take responsibility for serious physical disease. While almost any one may prescribe the simple medical remedies for preventing or arresting well-understood irregularities, only the professionally trained are equipped to perform an operation or to treat a serious disorder. So there are emotional difficulties which require the expert help of a psychiatrist. Skilled help is being provided as the prevalence of emotional problems is recognized. The placing of people trained to deal with emotional problems in schools, juvenile courts, and children's clinics is a response to a demand for help. While this professional aid removes from the leader of girls the responsibility of dealing with certain kinds of difficulty, it does not take away from her the obligation to increase her knowl-

edge of emotional hygiene, in order to prevent or remove the difficulties that in the past have been assumed to be the inevitable results of the depravity of human nature. We begin very early to help children to keep physically well, by teaching them how to prevent the kinds of infection that will be destructive to the physical organism. In the same way, and with the same objective attitude, we need to help people to an understanding of the bases of emotional health.

UNDERSTANDING THE GIRL'S ENVIRONMENT

It has been assumed in this discussion, sometimes more implicitly than explicitly, that it is never possible to understand any girl by her immediate behavior. It is necessary to get behind any specific act, in order to know more of the forces which are playing into the life of the girl. Wherever there is a difficulty, there is likely to be a family or community basis for it, which often needs to be given attention, even before attempting to help the girl directly.[1] It is evident, then, that it is not sufficient for a leader to know the girl as she sees her in class or club. She should know the girl's physical record to discover what, if any, physical handicaps she is carrying. She needs to know something of the girl's family and what it represents in her life. What are its assets and liabilities as concern her de-

[1] Some of the simpler considerations of case work are given here, because they need to be understood even by the untrained leader, that she may increasingly have a chance to work cooperatively with those who are more technically trained in social psychiatric work. Fuller information can be secured by consulting books on social case work, written from a psychological point of view.

velopment? Where does it impose on her responsibilities that are too heavy for her to carry? What difficulty is there because of the emotional atmosphere in which the girl has to live? What is the effect on her of the security and insecurity, the satisfactions and dissatisfactions, that her parents have had in their childhood life, and in their relations with each other? In addition, it is important to know what has happened to the girl in her school experience, and in making contacts with others outside the family. Particularly is it important to know toward what goals and achievements she is striving.

This understanding of the origin of adolescent difficulties is important because the decision as to what should be done to help in any particular case will depend upon what factors are contributing to it. There are, first, those difficulties arising from the fact that the situation in which the individual finds herself is more tense than her physical or emotional equipment can meet; second, those growing out of past experiences, of which she is often unconscious, but which have created conflicts or have caused a strong emotion that make her helpless until they are removed; and, third, those coming from lack of the skills necessary in the situations the girl must face. In the case of a girl in the first group, who is in a situation unsuited to her or too much for her, it may be necessary to discover the extent to which environment can be modified or entirely changed so as to remove her, at least temporarily, from responsibilities or relationships that involve more liabilities than she can negotiate with

any chance of success. To pile up experiences of failure is to undermine the confidence in herself that is basic to her success. If she is fighting a physical handicap, she should have a physician's help; if her home or school is a place of too much strain, some temporary arrangement may be made that will take her out of it, for the time at least; if her job is too demanding, another one may be found that will mean less of a given kind of pressure.

CONFLICTS FROM PAST EXPERIENCE

To deal with the second type of difficulty—conflicts that are the result of past experiences—involves more skill and patience. Because they are often due to the fact that the girl cannot carry out emotionally what she decides with her mind, it does not help to deal with the trouble on the basis of logic or argument. If she has been frightened in the dark, it does not help her to assure herself with her intellect that there is nothing there to be afraid of. She must, somehow, emotionally go back into the dark, and feel in its atmosphere a new assurance that of itself removes the bugaboo. This means that she must be willing to face the things she has always kept covered. In facing them, there must be the atmosphere of confidence which will bring her reassurance, for merely to reface them and to be frightened again is to reinforce rather than to eliminate the old fear. This is the reason the leader who can listen sympathetically and help the girl build new experience, where she has been afraid, is of great importance to her.

The deeper the hurt of the past, the more resistance the girl unconsciously will offer to the possibility of entering the area in which she has suffered. It is possible for her to circumvent the difficulty by avoiding those situations that are likely to set it in drive, but to do so is to cut herself off from aspects of life in which she might be participating. Leaders need to be aware of this possibility, because church, school, or club programs are sometimes used as an evasion, and made a substitute for other activities in which the girl should be taking part. This is the reason that there is a fallacy in the prevalent tendency to judge the success of a leader of a club by her ability to hold girls over a period of time. It is all too easy for the club to "fix" the girl's satisfactions, so that boys are unnecessary or to provide her a medium for "service" activities, in lieu of leading her to face the necessary development of herself. The adolescent group, whether in school, church, or other institution, ought to be a temporary relationship to make progress possible. Alumnæ organizations may merely be the means of holding on to adolescence after it should be outgrown. Instead of furnishing girls a method of evasion in emotional difficulties, the club ought to give help in going back to the source of the strain, and in reestablishing, at that point, a different set of attitudes and feelings.

Unfortunate experiences of the past have established within the girl feeling habits, which are as automatic as other habits, and whenever she comes to similar situations, she has, quite without reference to the

seriousness or difficulty of the immediate incident, strong emotions of fear and shame. Under the circumstances the girl cannot deal with her emotions, for she assumes that, because she feels as she does, there must be something dangerous or wrong in the situation. It is only as she traces her feelings to their origin and faces the original situation, under conditions that make for a different outcome, that she releases the original response, and disconnects it from the situations she is now facing. When it dawns on her that she is afraid of boys, not because they are dangerous or she is inferior, but because she has been frightened or shamed in her earlier experiences about sex and has been warned against boys; when she becomes aware that she feels insecure and inferior in her relations with other girls, not because of her actual inability but because she was made fun of, or ignored, or talked of disparagingly, in the relations of the home, and that she is just repeating her earlier feelings of resentment and despair; when, in various areas of life, she connects the feelings she cannot understand with their origin, then she is able to disconnect them from the immediate situation, and to deal with them for what they really are.

THE PLACE OF A COACH

In the case of difficulties in the third group, which are due to a lack of the requisite skills, the girl needs a coach, who will help her to learn. A coach in any area of life is a more skilled and experienced person, who is willing to take temporary responsibility for another,

until the learner has developed skill of her own and no longer needs assistance. We have usually thought of coaching as related to athletics or dramatics; but help of this sort is important in almost every area of life. It is one of the most important functions of the leaders and organizations related to adolescent girls. The girl needs to learn how to depend upon herself, whether she is, in general, a dependent person, or just inadequate in some one area where a special skill is needed. The only person who can be for any girl an effective coach is the one in whom she has confidence. The girl needs to rest secure enough in her confidence in the other to be free to build up confidence in herself. The success of a coach should be judged by the extent to which she makes herself unnecessary to the person she would help. So high a premium has been placed on one's ability to be of service to others that it is sometimes difficult to realize that it is a greater gift to know how to become useless to another. In other words, the measure of the leader's success is in the extent to which girls can increasingly go ahead without her.

Such coaching involves particular care to share with the person who is learning knowledge, not only of what to do, but of how to do it. Coaching in methods requires that the coach shall have the patience to stay by, while the learning is in process, to help as need arises, and also to keep the learner from dangerous failure. Progress comes when a coach puts herself alongside the learner, at whatever stage in progress she may be, helping her to develop from that point. To

urge a girl to go beyond her experience and skill is to hinder her progress. To throw a person into deep water, before she has had considerable practice in using her muscles and emotions in safer places, is to frighten her, so that she may not risk the water again. To ask a girl to take responsibility beyond her probable chance of success is to have her refuse to do it the next time, or to lead her to promise and fail to meet her promise. It should be remembered that, in any new situation, it is necessary to have had enough security in the old to make it possible to attempt the new experience. To lose the old security before the new has been built to take its place is to face the paralysis of emotional homesickness that makes impossible the acceptance of the new. To be asked to give up the security of home before one has learned the independence necessary to live with the less sympathetic group in the outside world, results in one's running back home whenever difficulty arises. When the new has built itself into life as a basis of security, the old which it has replaced may be let go without fear or regret. If a leader feels impatient to change attitudes or habits in her group too quickly, her impatience is probably an evidence of her own lack of security about the new thing; on the same principle, the dogmatic assertion of any principle or attitude is a revelation of the proponent's need to convince herself by the loudness or positiveness of her assertions.

The coach also needs to provide for practice in new skills because worthwhile skill is never easily attained. Just as the girls' present habits are the products of

years of learning, so the replacing of them by more desirable ones must be brought about by practice. Practice in the past was often carried on at the wrong places. It has been assumed that "discipline" and "self-denial" are of value in themselves, and that self-control might be built in the abstract. A fundamental fact of life is that one must make choices if she would focus her efforts. If she decides to be a doctor she must give up being a lawyer or a business executive; if she chooses to follow the path to the mountains, she will miss the sea, at least on that day. But the denial is not made because she must give up the profession of law or miss the sea, but because she has committed herself to medicine or the mountains. Discipline (or practice) is effective only when it is related to the purpose and achievement of the individual in such a way that it affords a reasonable amount of immediate satisfaction; and self-denial is sound only as it is related to a commitment to a more desired end!

The newer approaches to education recognize this in their provision for a motive for the child's practice before she must labor with the technique. She has a chance to hear music, to move to rhythm, to make up simple tunes and melodies, before she is forced to practice scales or five-finger exercises. She is led to want to draw before she is taught the laws of perspective or the technique of composition. When she feels the desire to be able to play something that involves scales, or wants to find out how to arrange the material on a flat piece of paper, the time spent in practice of scales or perspective has within itself the dynamic that

tends to take away the sense of resistance or resentment. So the girl needs to be exposed to the "wholes" of experience, in the realms in which she must practice, in order to have within herself the dynamic for the effort that attainment must involve. She needs to be in the presence of persons of radiant personality, she needs to be exposed to beauties of form and color and rhythm, she needs to honor her own haltings and incomplete impulses toward creation, in order to fire her soul with the desires and goals from which she cannot escape. But these activities must represent media of expression which draw out the girl's own capabilities, rather than those she carries on because the leader likes them. Many a girl has been overencouraged in the development of a given talent or ability because the leader herself has coveted that particular skill or accomplishment. At no place are parents more likely to fail than in their determination that their children shall have opportunity for things of which they were deprived, without realizing that their very insistence is a repetition in the child's case of what happened to them. Girls should have the opportunity to follow lines of interest which are their own; and leaders must be resourceful in helping girls in many and varied interests.

HOW TO DETERMINE RIGHT AND WRONG

At no point is coaching more needed than in giving the girl practice in making her own decisions. The postponement of vocational and marriage responsi-

bilities under the prolongation of education in modern life may complicate rather than aid the girl's growth. Parents often seek occasion to prolong the care from which they have derived satisfaction; teachers tend to treat their pupils as children, for whom the major decisions of life need to be made; ministers are often willing to take responsibility for beliefs of their congregation. The girl, however, cannot be protected from a changing world, where the simple standards of her earlier experience are no longer adequate. As she meets different standards in different groups, those absolute authorities, who have guided her thus far, have to be challenged. One evidence of the prevalence of their confusion is the oft-repeated question asked by girls: "How can one know what is right and wrong?" Clearly, the former reliance on conscience as an infallible guide no longer brings any assurance, because it too soon becomes evident that people who are equally sincere may be directed to quite contrary actions by their consciences. When people who read the same Bible or belong to the same institution differ in their interpretation of what is right or wrong, there is bound to be confusion. How then does she decide in questions of right or wrong? In the past she assumed that right and wrong were absolute values, revealed in the Bible, in the church, in some favored philosophy or person. It was wrong to dance, to smoke, to study or sew on Sunday, or to believe in this doctrine or that, because the Bible or the church or a trusted adult said so. As long as the girl remains within a homogeneous group, in which there is little divergence in standards, these

standards hold authority. But when she goes out of the family circle to school, and sees her playmate doing that which she has been forbidden to do, or when the girl becomes intimate with girls of other social, religious, or racial groups, there is a strain put upon her conformity to any absolute values. She must then face the question as to whether her family or her playmate, whether her church or her friend is right.

Added to this discrepancy in the external standards, is the conflict of testimony within herself. She may be convinced of the rightness of some action and still feel wrong whenever she does it; she may live up to the letter of the law, and still hate whatever is responsible for its existence. If her "law" has been too strict a code, she is likely to revolt from its demands or denials, and swing to the extreme of doing what she wants to do instead of what she "ought" to do. If she always has had to refuse candy, she may ruin her digestion in asserting her freedom to "eat all she wants." Or if she be afraid of life without some final source of control, she may accept the more precarious control of the opinions and standards of her group, or she may feverishly seek from classroom, church, or friends, the assurance and finality of judgment she has lost. Her eager loyalty to a minister, club leader, teacher, or friend may be her search for the person who can be a substitute for the authority she is discarding. Instead of relying on absolute standards, the girl needs to recognize that things and practices are not in themselves right or wrong, but must be considered in the light of their meaning and effect on the individual her-

self, and on the life of which she is a part. Something constructive for one person may hold another back; a necessary stimulus to one may mean unmanageable irritation or impulse to another. It is, therefore, impossible to answer with a general "yes" or "no" the question of the "rightness" or "wrongness" of any activity.

It is evident that the only hope for the girl is that she shall learn, not the answers to her questions, but the way of finding these for herself. To throw the responsibility for decisions on children without preparing them for making them is to be unfair to them. The mother who says most loudly, "Use your own judgment," too seldom really means it; and she often is merely shifting to the child a responsibility which she does not know how to assume herself, and for which she has done nothing to prepare; often, indeed, she is using the pseudo-freedom as a means of compulsion. If the girl has been shielded from the results of decisions, she will not be able to see the issues involved clearly enough to be able to appraise those issues in a new decision. If they are in an area in which she has not as yet had experience, she is compelled to move on a trial-and-error basis, unless she can call to her aid those who have had the experience she lacks. The ability to make decisions is progressively developed. There cannot be presented to the little child the alternatives that will destroy life; she should not be allowed to destroy that which is of value to others. She need not have to choose whether or not to tear the book, if it is kept out of her reach until she is able to know for what a book is used; she need not choose

whether or not to break the radio or the watch, if radios and watches are kept out of her reach until she is able to appreciate them. On the other hand, there can be increasing opportunity for choice given her in the places where she has a basis for it. She does have a right to state her preference for one dress over another; for one color as against another; for one game rather than another. Instead of the finality of the command "Do not," she can be told why grown-ups do or do not do certain things; she can be shown, dramatically or vicariously, the consequences of certain decisions. When she comes to see action and consequences related to one another, rather than to see consequences always as approvals and disapprovals of some loved or interfering person, she is beginning to come into the possession of the materials out of which independent judgment is built. Beginning with these simplest decisions, she needs the opportunities to learn the process of making judgments. These can be widened, as her experience develops. If skill in making decisions is developed before adolescence, much of the confusion of that period can be eliminated.

In the attempts to escape from the bondage of rigid codes and standards, therefore, the ability to make decisions is necessary. This ability is not that kind of open-mindedness, in which the "mind is open at both ends," and no decision is ever reached. Fairmindedness may be the better designation. An experimental attitude toward life necessitates conclusions, which are tried out in life; but these conclusions should be reached after comparing more than one possibility, and they should

be tested and revised in experience. The ability to weigh alternatives, and to keep remaking decisions in the light of new factors and information is essential to a growing life. To do this, the girl must be able to foresee the possible consequences of the alternatives open to her, and to judge their bearing upon her life desires and values. The ability to weigh the new data is dependent on the background against which they are considered. If that background is but a passing stream of sensations, unorganized into any coherent unity, one can lay little claim to being an experimenter in any scientific sense, or of having any mind to make up. Any experiment worthy the name, then, involves a hypothesis worked out on a basis of thought, the testing of that assumption, the evaluation of the meaning of the test to the hypothesis, as well as to the data which the hypothesis challenged or reinforced. Youth needs to be checked as to the extent to which the claim of being openminded or experimental is an excuse for laziness and inefficiency, rather than an evidence of freedom and development. It is the capacity of human beings to choose what they really want, and to avoid that which will cheat them out of fullness of life, which is their unique possession; the attempts which we see to substitute for such ability the "rationalizations" of unintegrated emotion, partial desires and short-sighted impulses give testimony to the sorry makeshifts with which many people meet life. It is the opportunity of the leader of girls to help them know not *what* is right and wrong but *how* to determine progressively the right and wrong for themselves.

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CHAPTER VI

ENRICHING THE LIFE OF ADOLESCENTS

MANY adolescent girls have come out of a background which has lacked cultural elements, and are living in environmental conditions which are stultifying rather than enriching. Others, who are in the midst of opportunities for the enrichment of personality, do not have the ability to utilize them. Adult friends and leaders of girls have an especial opportunity in helping girls of both groups to enter into the rich heritage which may be theirs.

MAKING FRIENDS

One of the most insistent and wistful questions asked by girls is how one may make friends. Only those who have come really close to the lives of girls realize the extent of the loneliness of most adolescents, and especially of those who, because they are shy or distrustful of themselves, do not know how to reach out to their fellows for the kinds of response they crave. Even those who seem most gay and thoughtless often use their attitudes of optimism or nonchalance as a cover for the loneliness they dare not admit, even to themselves. One of the common reasons for this difficulty in widening her contacts is the girl's distrust of her own home or social background, which leaves her

with a sense of having nothing to contribute to the friendships she would like to share. Her concern to hide what she feels others might disapprove makes her self-conscious at the places where to forget herself and enter into the thing that is being done is important. It is easy for her to think that others have none of the needs that she herself feels. The wise leader will help the girl see that most people live in a world where they feel they must make a brave front. She will be the kind of person who, even in casual contacts, can help girls throw away the masks that are so hard to wear.

The girl's difficulty in making friends may be due to her lack of certain social techniques, which would make her feel at home in the new situation in which she finds herself. This sense of inadequacy is likely to make her overrate such externals as clothes, money, and places of amusement, and she may attempt to imitate the superficial elements of equipment, thus spoiling her chance to be distinctive or interesting in her own right. Many a girl has persuaded herself that she does not like social affairs because she does not know the right thing to wear or because she does not know which spoon to use, or how to carry her part in a conversation, or how to say good-bye. All these matters are skills, which do not come automatically, but are those in developing which any girl needs information and practice. If the opportunities for learning such skills have not come to her in her earlier life, she is likely to be unwilling to confess her ignorance by asking for the help she needs. It is therefore the leader's function to sense the lack, and provide for meeting it, either

by way of information given to a group, or by making an occasion where, in her company, the girl can make her first trials. Many a girl "loses out" on friendships with boys because she does not know how to carry "the line" of conversation that happens to be the accepted preliminary to acquaintance in the group in which she moves. If a girl has not had brothers, and in her earlier experience has missed the normal impersonal contacts with boys that would come from playing and working with them, and so has not become accustomed to taking them for granted, another girl may help by making "double dates" with her, so that she may have reinforcement while she learns the things that will give her confidence to risk herself alone.

The girl may have, underneath these external lacks of social technique, the capacities which would make her at home and desired in all the social relationships she fears, if she could but find the help she needs in developing these capacities. Such a simple technique as being able to listen well, in this day when every one seems more concerned with the reply to be made than with what is being said, often makes the listener a much-sought-for companion. The secret of the reputation of many a hostess, who is considered particularly charming and intelligent, is the fact that she has the capacity to listen during an evening's conversation. This is not to reinforce the common assumption that men, in particular, like best to hear themselves talk, but to recognize that most people hear little of what another says because they are taken up with what they are going to say when the speaker finishes, and

that the "interesting" person is likely to be the one who can listen sympathetically.

CLOTHES AND THINGS

Clothes also are a part of the enrichment of life. Often it has been impossible for a girl to have clothes that express her distinctive self. Mothers may have insisted on dressing their daughters as they have longed to dress themselves; economic considerations may have made the girl always buy the thing that was durable instead of that which was beautiful; she may have had no standard of line or form, and so have bought that which was most in vogue at the moment, only to lose thereby any claim to individuality or personal attractiveness. If she thinks she is unattractive, she may have refused to think of clothes, and insisted that to care about them was a sign of inferiority. She may have been afraid of her womanhood, and so may have dressed in as "tailored" a fashion as possible, to avoid being "feminine."

To the extent to which the girl lacks skill in choosing clothes which will best bring out her own particular type of physical charm, she will need a wise coach, whose taste she can trust. This person may be able to work out with her a plan of expenditure for clothes that will make it possible for her to buy the right kind of things, even on a very limited income. She may go with the girl and help her select her clothes for a time, sharing with her all the while the basis on which she would choose one

style rather than another. Soon the girl may be able to make her own choices, reserving only the final decision for the check of the coach, and finally she may not need her help at all, because she knows for herself what is "right." If she can find the things that suit her and make her "different" enough to attract the notice that should come to her as an individual, she is relieved of the necessity to compete with others by having whatever they have, whether she can afford it or not. Every girl needs to recognize the obligation to be as attractive as possible. The girl who says she does not care whether she looks overworked or shabby is probably using her indifference to cover her sense of inferiority. It is when physical attractiveness is accorded its proper importance that there is the basis of making it really the outward expression of an inner grace. Respect for one's own personality cannot exist without attention to the external element of that personality's expression.

Ability to handle "things" is another important skill. People are not always conscious of what the color of the walls, or the order or disorder of a room does to the mood of the people in it. It is interesting to note how the personality of the occupant is revealed by the furnishings of a girl's room; what pictures she chooses to put on her walls, what things she chooses to put on her dresser or table; what books she keeps near at hand; what colors she uses in even the simplest scarfs or draperies, in what order the whole is kept. Something fine has happened to the soul of the girl who chooses a few lovely things with which to associate in

the moments she is most alone. The whole moral atmosphere of one dormitory was changed by putting growing flowers in the girls' rooms that were tawdry and unkept. The presence of one beautiful thing called forth in the girls the latent hunger for beauty.

DRAMATICS AND DANCING

As has been said in a former chapter,[1] the provision of ready-made entertainment in every form tends to make it difficult for the individual to develop her own imagination to the place where it becomes creative. There is not time in the girl's schedule or space in her home for the development of skills in living. Amateur magazines, produced by family collaboration and cherished for many years as invaluable chronicles of the family's life, were usually published in the spacious quarters of an attic. Old-time theatricals were given in the woodshed, or at least in a room which could be temporarily pre-empted for the purpose. But small houses and apartments contain no such facilities. The emphasis on dramatics in clubs and schools, and the development of the Little Theatre idea in many cities, is one way of providing for the development of the same type of expression. Professor Patty Hill has said of the drama, "It is trying on life to get the feel of it."[2] It is interesting to note the things that happen to the girl who finds in a drama a chance to live out a part she has never dared to play in real

[1] See pp. 11 and 12.
[2] Rugg and Shumaker, *The Child Centered School*, p. 272.

life. Often it is the beginning of a new confidence in herself and in her powers to achieve. While there is less necessity to create one's own recreation than formerly, there is, as a balance, a richer range of material for the use of the imagination than ever before.

To watch any older, or even a younger, group of people walk, or talk, or even dance together is to be struck with the lack of freedom and spontaneity in their muscular movements. The tension of the life they live is reflected in strained and tense muscles. The fear of their spirits is revealed by the movements of their bodies. Almost miraculous things have happened to girls who have learned how to release this tension by the kind of dancing or physical exercise that gave them their first medium for the expression of the feelings within. There was a marked change in the intellectual processes of one group of conference girls who learned to "flit"—that is, to give expression in interpretative motion to the various moods and impulses of their beings. A girl who had learned to dance for the first time was radiant, saying, "Now I dance all the way to the factory and back again." Many girls who have been inarticulate, unable to express in words the things they longed to share with the group, have found a medium for that contribution in their bodily movements. Beautiful services of worship have been worked out with no words, but with the worshippers' giving expression to adoration or penitence or thanksgiving by the movements of their bodies. Many a girl has first felt the mood of penitence when she gave it physical expression. One group of girls, who were

working to free themselves of certain prejudices which controlled them against their wills, learned to understand them more completely as they assumed the position of those whose arms were bound and struggled to free themselves physically from the bondage.

MUSIC AND LITERATURE

Music as well has power to give expression to pent-up emotions that cause difficulty when there is no way to give them expression. In music that is really lived by the individual, she may jump or run, weep or shout with joy, and still maintain a proper attitude of decorum. It is the power of music to call forth and glorify emotions of the unconscious depths of the being, and so to give a new significance to life. When one understands what musical composition expresses, she has a chance to choose which feelings she desires to have aroused, and she will not choose a stimulus to excitement and abandon, when she has need of calm, or wants a medium for pain. There is a chance for any group of girls, even in the smallest place, to develop an understanding of music to the point that the compositions of the past and the present will have meaning, instead of being only a jargon of sounds. Children's concerts, open to grown-ups, give any one the keys to the interpretation of musical composition. The best music of the world is available, through mechanical reproduction, to those who wish to understand and appropriate it.

Literature also has always offered a whole world of

experience, but too few know how to live in it. Libraries make it possible to share and to appropriate the experiences of the race. The girl may choose adventure or romance, exposition or argument, according to her experience and mood. Characters in history and fiction may be even more potent than any living person as a means of character formation for the girl who may aspire to the qualities they portray or to the goals they attain. It is today being recognized that even the person of ordinary ability may express herself in poetry or prose that has qualities of beauty and charm. The work of the High School pupils in the Lincoln School of New York City, under the guidance of Hugh Mearns, is a challenge to any one who has contact with the minds of adolescents.[3] The poetry produced every summer at the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Industrial Workers is remarkable evidence of this same capacity. If a girl does not write her own poetry, she often finds much joy in collecting for herself those bits from great literature that make a special appeal to her. An older leader of girls holds as one of her most prized possessions the collection of poetry she began in her high school days. She put into a loose leaf notebook the things she loved best; when there was no more space in the book, she discovered that certain poems no longer had their former charm, and so these were removed and others put in their places. In looking over the discarded collection much later, she discovered it to be a revealing emotional autobiography. One of the interesting bits of

[3] See Mearns, Hugh, *Creative Youth.*

Mearns' technique was his constant reading to the students, reading that made them in turn want to read to one another.

It is pitiful to see how many people live in a dreary round of monotony because they have never learned to see, or to hear, or to accept the miracles of the life that is pulsating within themselves and their fellows, as well as in all nature around them. We admire genius, and fail to remember the extent to which it is the ability to see the unusual in the commonplace. We search far and wide for adventure and new interest, and come back to find the interesting person is the one who may never have gone far from her present abode, but who has brought the world to her home, and learned what the busy searcher has never had time to find. The question then becomes: How may the girl enrich the ordinary life she must live? Certainly through music and dramatics, through social life and recreation, through literature and nature a new world may be opened to the average adolescent girl.

IDEALS

Ideals have always been considered the stuff out of which life is enriched; but the extent to which ideals are an incentive in the enrichment of a girl's life is dependent upon the extent to which her experience gives her the material out of which worthy ideals may be built. Often, a worthy aim or a high ideal is supposed to have almost magic power to remake conduct, or to give dynamic and "inspiration" to effort. Per-

haps just as often this same kind of goal seems to mark the failure of the individual to attain it, and to be a constant reminder of her inadequacy or lack of will. Sometimes the ideal is the center around which life is rallied and its conflicting elements unified; sometimes it is the substitute for effort, in that its unattainableness is a spur to nothing more real than phantasy or abstract devotion. The picture of herself as a concert pianist may be the drive that keeps the girl to hours of wearying practice, or she may use up her energy in dreaming of the tributes that will fall at her feet after her performance. The goal of social righteousness may bring reinforcement for hours of unnoticed work at the correction of specific social ills, or it may become the subject for nothing more serious than platform denunciations or parlor conversations on the ills of poverty. To see only the immediate is to run the risk of being caught in unproductive detail; to see only the distant is to be ineffective in the process of effecting change. Being radical as a goal in itself is likely to be more productive of transient notice for the individual than socially effective in producing changed attitude and conditions. The difference in effectiveness lies in the degree to which the distant goal is related to the more immediate steps for its achievement.

RELIGION

Religion, in a very real sense, does make a contribution to the enrichment of personality by affording an opportunity for the individual to be important in

the universe, and by providing a goal or task which is absorbing. Without going into the question of the soundness of any type of religious experience, it is evident how the Christian mystics' sense of the presence of God has functioned in one of these realms. Leuba has said of these mystics: "Loved by the Christian God, their lives became unified and centered around him. Their energies are no longer dissipated in fruitless yearnings and conflicting tendencies. Sources of energy until then dormant or inhibited are aroused to great activity. Thus their vital aspirations are fulfilled and their claims granted." [4] To be important to the God of the Universe, and to work cooperatively with him is to have a basis of confidence for life and an incentive for the use of one's energies. This experience, however, cannot come for the asking, or by the acceptance of the formulations of other people's experience. It will have reality only as it is composed of the girl's own experience. Whatever she believes about God is really her interpretation of life in terms of the universe. If she really believes that God is love, it is because she has found in her experience the meaning of love, which, since it is undeniably hers, must be accounted for in the makeup of the Universe. If this and similar experiences are of such depth and significance as to give meaning to all of life, then God will be for the girl a God of Love, because love seems fundamental in the Universe. If, on the other hand, life has been so twisted and warped for her that goodness and love seem a mockery, her self will

[4] Leuba, Jas. H., *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, p. 295.

believe, if she dare be honest, that God, if there be a God, is cruel, and love a delusion. If, failing to find this fullness of life, she attempts to use an experience of God or of Christ as a substitute and compensation for her failure to find reality in life, religion will become an ecape from life rather than its reinforcement. It is easier for adolescent girls to develop these compensatory religious experiences than to find their religious faith as the token and sign of their personal development. A girl's real religion, then, is what she lives by. Whether it be one of childish dependence or of adult comradeship will be determined by the extent to which her life is lived on a childish or a mature level.

Older people make difficulty for adolescents in their religious development by trying to make symbols have reality for them, before they have had a chance at the experience which the symbol is meant to represent. They teach them formulæ for motives before those motives have been awakened in the desires of the personality. They give them a definition of love, before love in its fullness has been a conscious reality. So they send them out with only a shadow of equipment that fails them in any actual situation because it does not belong to them. It is our nature as human beings to be able to formulate and interpret experiences, and to use that interpretation as the basis for the control of future action. Only as the formulated beliefs are consistent with the unformulated faith by which the girl really lives do the formulated beliefs make a positive contribution to the achieving of life; to the extent to which they are inconsistent, there is lack of harmony

and confusion. It is for this reason that, if we would change a girl's religion, we must change her life. We cannot use it as a substitute for living. When we have opened the doors to life to her, we have provided for the deepening and enriching of her religious experience.

What, then, might religion represent to the girl? In its essence we might call it joy—the upwelling, creative going forth of life, that is not broken against barriers of conflict and inhibition, life which turns energy into action when action is necessary, and into relaxation when effort is no longer needed. It may at times mean a transforming of the self that at times is so drastic as to be best described as being reborn. It should mean life that is so unified that there is no separation between the physical and spiritual, the secular and sacred, but rather a harmony that is the quality of their fusion; life that is not afraid of its urges and impulses, but believes in their potentialities. It should represent the confidence she has in the Universe, the faith that is the drive to the realization of this confidence, and the fellowship that reinforces her confidence and belief.

How then can we help make this religious experience possible for the girl? Because it must come through dealing directly with the things that matter in life, a girl must be helped to face rather than to escape the actual problems of her life, and to find their meaning and significance. She must learn how to meet the new and different with an attitude of anticipation and expectancy, rather than of fear and resent-

ment; how to see the untried as the material for enlarging experience, and difficulties as a challenge to attainment and strength. She must see the beauty of sound and color and form, and realize the wonder of personality that is radiant and victorious. This means that there should be a chance for her to talk over the things that are really vital to her life, in the light of what she most wants life to be; it means she must have a chance to admit unashamed the things she has not yet attained, in the search for a better way than she has yet found; it means the honest risking of the new and untried in relationships, and in responsibility; it means bringing her into contact with persons who, in the past or the present, have lived constructively and radiantly. This is to say that the very essence of religion can be found in the joyous comradeship of youth and age, which has in its mutual relationships all the elements necessary for the achieving of a richer life for both.

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CHAPTER VII

ADULTS AND ADOLESCENTS

ADULTS have three types of relationship with adolescents: there is domination, in which the adult attempts to take complete control; there is leadership, in which the adult temporarily assumes large responsibility for the adolescent in those areas of life in which she is still immature or unskilled; and there is comradeship, in which various interests and adventures are shared. The first is attempted usually for the satisfaction of the adult and is harmful to the adolescent's development; the second is a temporary parent relationship, in which the leader assumes control until such time as increased experience and skill make the leader no longer needed, or a relation of comradeship becomes possible; the third is a relationship in which each contributes to the affair in hand in proportion to her ability. The goal is a genuine comradeship between adults and adolescents; but the intermediate relationship, usually necessary because of the ordinary pre-adolescent experiences of girls, is one of leadership. The important thing is that this temporary parent control on the part of the leader of the club or class shall be exercised in such a way that it makes the girls more and more independent. If this is to be the result, certain conditions will need to be met by the adult leader.

If complete maturity on her part were a prerequisite, no older person would dare presume to undertake the leadership of adolescent girls. It is essential, however, that she be in the process of working out for herself her own problems, and that she shall be far enough ahead of those the girl must meet to have perspective and to be able to make a judgment on the girl's. Because so much more is transmitted by experience than by instruction, adolescent characteristics in the adult often seriously complicate the problems the adolescent girl must solve. It is essential that the leader of girls shall have reached that degree of independence which enables her to live in the world of reality; that she shall have developed the degree of freedom and courage which makes possible an adjustment to changing situations, so that each is a new adventure; and that she shall have developed that degree of objectivity which enables her to be discriminating as she seeks to aid in the solution of problems; —in other words, it is important that she be a reasonably mature person herself.

USE OF AUTHORITY

One of the first places that her leadership will be tested is in the way she as leader uses the authority which as a substitute parent she must exercise. Because of the experiences through which most girls go in working out a satisfactory relation to those who, as parents or relatives, were in the places of authority in their earlier experience, there are particular problems

to be faced both by the girl and her leader, wherever there is a relationship involving authority. The teacher, dean of women, or club leader re-presents the parent with whom the original experiences have taken place. If a pattern of resistance has been built up in this earlier relationship, it is difficult not to have it reappear; or, if the former experience has meant over-dependence, that too will have to be faced. But the leader of adolescents has it within her control so to reinterpret authority that the maladjustment of the past may be overcome. The leader will often find it necessary to be temporarily the mother the girl needs, but she should be a wiser mother than the one who caused the difficulty; she will have to take temporary control, not demanding of the girl more maturity than she has achieved, and yet exercising that control in such a way that she does not arouse resistance and that she helps the girl to win confidence in herself.

Any leader of girls should understand when resistance to rules and conventions is a normal part of the girl's growing up, and interpret them as such to the girl. This means that she will welcome even the exaggerated revolt of the girl for whom it is the necessary step in getting away from an immature conformity to that which is not an expression of herself. The leader should be particularly careful that she keep an objective attitude to those elements of the girl's protest that affect her own relation to the girl. If she can be the mother who can be talked to disrespectfully for the time, without being afraid for her own prestige, she can the sooner bring the girl to an adult relationship. On

the other hand, the leader must keep the steady hand of control on many a girl who has been allowed to follow her conflicting desires with no help in discovering the basis of self-control. For such a girl, uncertain and wavering authority, at the places where control is temporarily necessary for developing self-determination and social adjustment, will only increase her difficulty. How to treat a group of girls in a way that makes for the development of all the members of the group is a problem similar to that of the mother who must think of the individual child's development and yet keep it from interfering with others in the family whose needs are greatly different. However, if the group can come to respect the fairness and sympathetic understanding of the older person, a new type of relationship with authority may come into the lives of the girls.

Particularly is it important that the leader be clear in her discrimination between those places where the circumstances make it impossible for her to offer an opportunity for choice and those places where real freedom is a possibility. It confuses the situation to seem to be offering to the girl an opportunity for choice, where the decision is determined in advance. Often self-government groups in school, club, or camp are set up in order to secure student assent to regulations that cannot be changed. In such a case, the girls are caught by having to enforce rules about which they have no real conviction. It is unfair, for example, to have a group discuss whether they will dance in an institution where the endowment or support is endan-

gered if dancing is done, or to have them discuss whether or not they will use electrical appliances in a building where the fire laws prohibit their use. To try to get them to make such decisions is only to repeat the old patterns, where parents seemed to give freedom, but made it impossible by appeals to loyalty, unselfishness, or consideration for the feelings of others. It is much better to face frankly with the girls the things which cannot be opened for discussion in a particular place or institution. They need to learn that the acceptance of the hospitality of certain institutions, or the decision to go to some places, is accompanied by certain prices, which they must be willing to pay, unless they are ready to open a much larger question of their relation to the institution as such. Nothing is more disastrous to the morale of school groups than the present attempts at student government and student honor systems, where the student council has no voice in the policy-making bodies, but is held responsible for the enforcement of obedience to their decisions. The important question on many a campus is not whether students should report the misconduct of another in an examination, but whether the system of examinations as conducted on the campus is educationally sound. If the charter is such that there can be no student voice in the making of policy, the institution should make this clear to the prospective member and should itself assume the enforcement of the regulations it has made.

OBJECTIVITY TOWARD HERSELF

A second test of the maturity of her leadership will be the way the adult receives the girl's attitudes to herself as leader of the group. She would be both much less flattered by the attitudes of some girls and less troubled by those of others, if she could realize that these responses to her are influenced by the extent to which she is a symbol of something in the girls' experience with which she as a leader has never had any connection. This will be clear if she will stop to think of the times she has been attracted or repelled by another person on first sight. It will usually be discovered that the person in question reminds her of some former pleasant or unpleasant experience, which she may even have forgotten for the time. The reaction of liking or disliking is made, not to the person, but to the former experience. In the discussion of "crushes," we have shown how the leader often represents to the girl the mother who has rejected her, or the mother she is seeking. The same type of situation occurs in numberless varieties. The wise leader will seek to discover the basis of the given reaction, so she may have a clue to the kind of assistance she must provide for the girl, if she is to help her grow beyond the necessity for that type of response. She may for a time need to be the recipient of the dammed-up emotion that breaks out in exaggerated forms of expression, but a recipient who will know how wisely to direct that emotion into the channels that will provide for its best future development.

Whatever her temporary function, the leader must recognize that for the girl who turns to her she is, at the time, the strategic person who can influence constructively the girl's direction of growth. She should not be afraid of the girl who either hates her or is fond of her. She should not distrust her own emotional reactions. The presence of the emotion is the very stuff out of which the drive to achievement is made. It might be added that no quality is more useful to the leader, who must achieve and maintain this objective attitude toward herself and the girl, than a sense of humor, which sees things in proportion, so that their relative values are evident. However, a sense of humor cannot be had for the asking, and is a sign of maturity rather than a quality to be aimed at in itself.

WILLINGNESS TO CONFESS IGNORANCE

A third test of the maturity of her leadership is the extent to which the leader is able to be honest with the girls regarding her own achievements. If she finds it necessary for her own security with the girls to cover over her ignorance, then there will be unreality in her relations with them. This does not mean that she must confess to the girls all her past failures and inefficiencies; but that in relation to any immediate situation, she will be willing to admit frankly the things she does not know or the problem for which she does not have the answer. She must be willing to recognize where the best experience of the past is inadequate for the new problems raised by elements in present situations. One

girl reported that the chief help she received at a summer conference was the discovery that older people, whose experience of life she trusted, were baffled by many of the same things that her group were having to face—that both older and younger people had to go on together, working at the solutions, if any answers to their problems were to be found. This implies, of course, that the confession of ignorance is not of value in itself, but only when the older person is willing to help find the answer she does not have. New experiences must come as a challenge, instead of something to be feared. So leaders are responsible, not for the answers to the questions which girls ask, but for creating an atmosphere where it is easy for girls to talk freely and frankly about anything that may puzzle them. Then it is that leader and girl can work together for the answer, without judgment or pretense on either side.

If she is to achieve this relationship, the leader of girls will need to give up the picture of herself as an example, whom the girls will delight to follow. She must give up the halo, once the distinguishing mark of the leader, for the more substantial accoutrements of the fellow traveller. It is safe to say that no attitude of the past was more detrimental to the relations of older and younger people than the necessity laid upon the older person to be an example that youth would follow. Nothing has led. to more subtle temptations for the older person. Furthermore, she must not set up artificial ideals for the girls because this makes for unreality in the group. The leader is often baffled by

the girl with whom she cannot come in contact, because the girl always assumes a rôle and shows only her club, her school, or her church self; but she does not realize that, as a leader, she may be stimulating the playing of this part, because she is not willing to have the girl act in a way considered not fitting for a girl in this club, or in a manner which some influential person might disapprove. The development of the actual girl must be for the leader of more importance than the traditional ideals and activities that have been supposed to be the function of the group.

ABSENCE OF CONDEMNATION

The fourth test of the maturity of her leadership is the fairness and objectivity of her attitude toward the difficulties and inadequacies of the girls themselves. The extent to which any older person will have the chance to share with girls the vital problems of life will depend in large measure on the extent to which the older person allows anything about which the girl may be concerned to call forth a response of disapproval or condemnation. One of the greatest contributions which can be made by the older person is to listen to the problems of youth. It is a common experience to go to some one for an answer to a question, and to come away without giving the consultant the opportunity to make even a suggestion. This is an evidence of the extent to which the answer to any question is in the asker's ability to formulate it. To be able to ask a question is often to have most of the answer.

If we are to help the girl to a growing basis of life, we must help her put a premium on being able to reveal her needs as well as her attainments, a quality all the more necessary because of the extent to which education has taught her to cover up her real needs and interests. Almost any leader of girls knows how often they make tentative approaches to discover whether the leader is "human," or whether she is an "old maid"; whether she will be sympathetic or shocked. No doctor can help any malady which frightens him, or for which he feels a moral condemnation. His sense of fear or of condemnation will be transferred to his patient much more readily than his words of assurance or treatment. Even so is it with the healing of emotional ills. Probably the root of the girl's difficulty is the fact that it once brought condemnation from older people or embarrassment to them. Consequently, she will go on hiding the real difficulty rather than expose herself again to the hurt that was in the original experience.

A person in difficulty has to recognize that she is not different from others, or peculiar because of her difficulty; she has to realize that her problems are of the sort common to all humanity, and, therefore, mark her as a part of all mankind rather than as inferior to others; she must learn that things she most covets as a part of her experience can come as a part of her dealing directly with such actual questions, and not by avoiding them or condemning herself because of them. The girl may find the first release necessary to solving the difficulty if she can discover some one to whom

she can tell whatever has given her a sense of inferiority, of terror, or of guilt, and who will reply to her in a normal tone of voice, "Yes, I understand. Let's see what it means"; or "Yes, many people are having to deal with this same thing." Often the things which are almost driving a girl to despair lose their power in telling them to another. The Roman Catholic Church has long recognized this therapeutic value of the confessional. Fortunate is the girl who has some one friend with whom she can be absolutely honest, and with whom she feels no condemnation. One of the greatest marks of distinctive leadership is the "ability to deal comprehendingly and gently with conduct, the ability to set free the speech and emotions of those who are repressed." [1]

Equally important is it that the person who shares the girl's difficulty shall not excuse it and condone it where justification is unsound. To fail to challenge the unsound elements in the conduct, or to offer sympathy when analysis is essential, is to complicate the problem for the girl quite as much as if one were to condemn her. The leader who does this is likely to be reliving her own difficulty, and seeking vicariously the satisfaction of justifying herself in her approval of the girl, just as the leader too ready to condemn may be betraying her own attitude towards an equivalent personal temptation or conduct. This is to say that in whatever area the leader herself is having difficulty, she is likely to create more conflict than she can resolve, because her attitude will be felt much more clearly

[1] Van Waters, Miriam, *Youth in Conflict*, p. 254.

than what she says. For this reason, the tone of her voice and the amount of tension in her words are significant factors in what she is able to do. The person troubled or stirred up about questions of sex cannot help a group by giving them a talk on sex. She will only intensify the difficulties already recognized. Only the person who can state calmly and objectively, even though earnestly, the factors to be considered in solving any problem should attempt to deal with it. That means that there will probably always be things with which any individual, for a time at least, ought not to deal. For those things she should try to find others who can help, and she should give her own time to those problems for which her experience has equipped her.

At no other period are personalities of such stimulating or depressing influence upon the girl as during adolescence. School and group interests and antipathies are much more likely to be built around personalities than around the content of classroom or club programs. Because of the insecurities and the conflicts which the adolescent may be facing one of the greatest contributions that can be made to her may be said to be "an enlightened personality with some serene goal." "Youth is full of depressions, depletions, and feelings of inadequacy. In this phase we fail them most. We ourselves are not anchored. We are full of complaints, doubts, whims, moods. It is easy for the child to get the impression that it is hardly worth while." [2] What she needs most in us is the construc-

[2] Van Waters, *Youth in Conflict,* pp. 223, 225, 249.

tive composure that comes from the power to maintain uniformity and continuity of feeling. Ethel Puffer Howes has expressed the same need, in the statement that youth needs "affection, serenity, order, continuity, justice, sympathy, and freedom, but the greatest of these is serenity." [3] It is this atmosphere that gives the reinforcement and the confidence which is necessary, if the girl is to make the necessary effort to achieve the maturity which we would like to have as her goal.

Too often the leader of girls has felt that in the interests of what she thought to be democracy it was her function to step aside and become a spectator in the group. To do this is to fail just as signally as to take too much control of the group and to rob it of the chance to become independent. The new relationship that will make for the sound development of both leader and girls is that of comradeship where each gives to the other of her own experience—the girls, that of a viewpoint possible only to those who have been born later chronologically, and of an enthusiasm which is a part of the increased sensitivity of adolescence; the leader the insight possible because she has lived longer and had an opportunity to try out some of the proposals of her own adolescence. In a comradeship, instead of a teacher-pupil or superior-inferior relationship, each has something to contribute to the other.

Who, then, is equipped to be a leader of girls? Clearly, it is the person who herself believes in life and its potentialities; who is facing her own problems

[3] Howes, E. P., *Concerning Parents*, p. 24.

with honesty, integrity, and serenity; who has faith in the life and potentialities of the adolescent girl; who demands that she shall have a chance to find love and achievement in an ever-widening circle of activities and relationships; and who can help her to an ever-deepening and enriching participation in the life of all mankind and of the universe.

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